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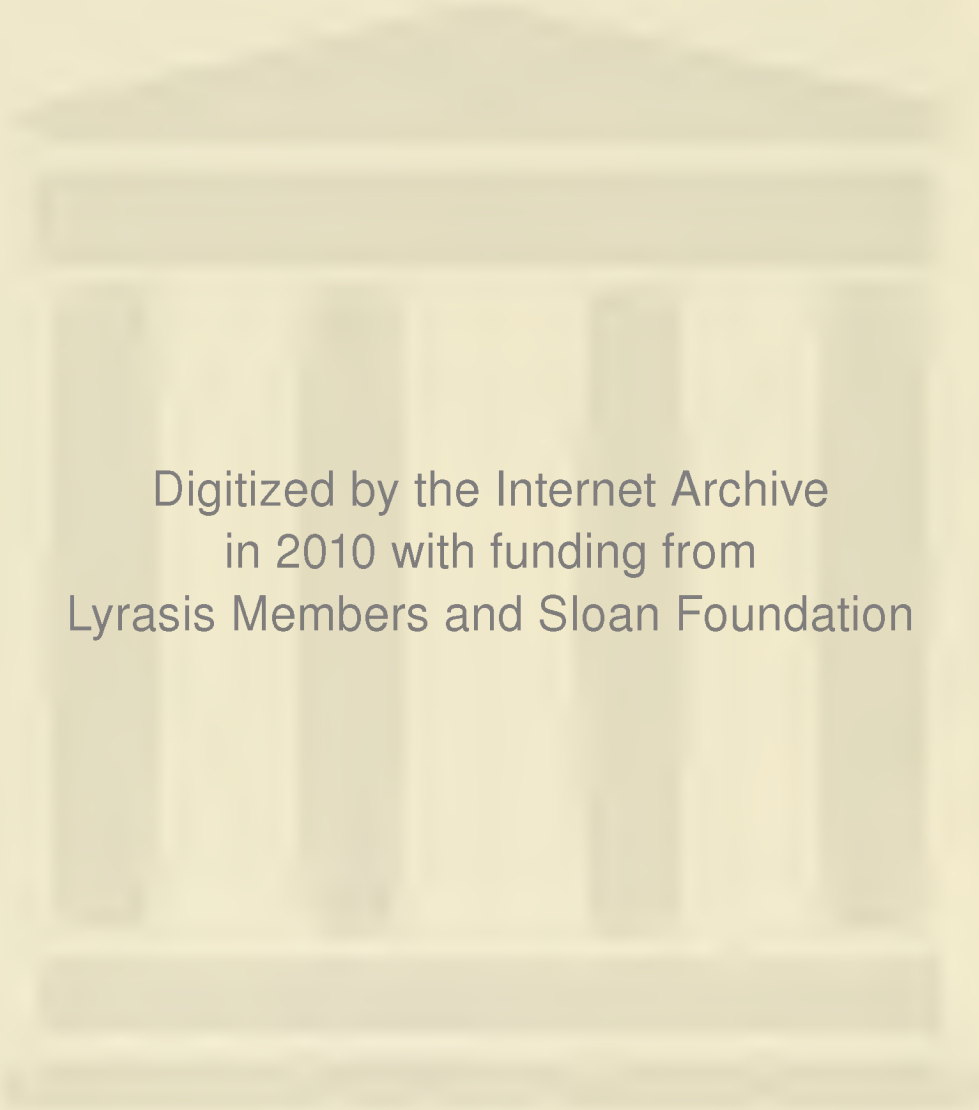
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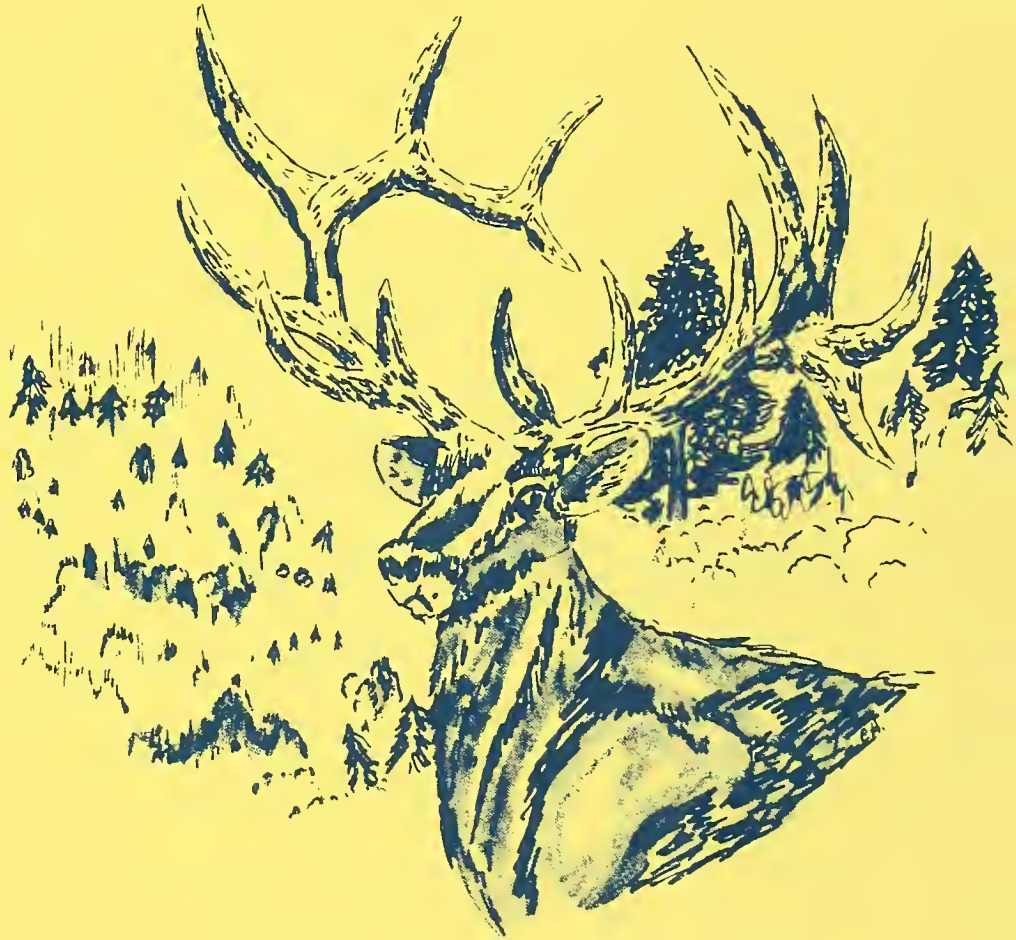








# TOWN OF ELKTON



## PLANNING BACKGROUND STUDIES AND ANALYSIS





# TOWN OF ELKTON

*Maryland. State Planning Dept.  
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Publication.*

## PLANNING BACKGROUND STUDIES AND ANALYSIS

The preparation of this document was financed in part through  
a comprehensive planning grant from the Department  
of Housing and Urban Development, as administered  
by Maryland Department of State Planning

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Prepared for  
Elkton Planning and Zoning Commission

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# ABSTRACT

TITLE: Town of Elkton - Planning Background Studies and Analysis

AUTHOR: Maryland Department of State Planning

SUBJECT: Background Studies and Data Pertaining to the Town of Elkton

DATE: November, 1977

PLANNING AGENCY: Maryland Department of State Planning

REFERENCE COPIES: Maryland Department of State Planning, 301 West Preston Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21201.

Cecil County Planning and Economic Development Department, Room 302, Court House, Elkton, Maryland 21921.

Elkton Planning and Zoning Commission, Town Office, P.O. Box 157, Elkton, Maryland 21921.

PURCHASE COPIES: Elkton Planning and Zoning Commission, Town Office

HUD PROJECT NO.: CPA MD 03-00-1021

SERIES NO.: NA

NUMBER OF PAGES: 61

ABSTRACT: The purpose of this document is to present planning data on conditions and trends in Elkton so that informed decisions on current and future growth of the Town can be made. The first part, consisting of background studies, presents information on population characteristics, economic factors, housing, community facilities, transportation and land use. Each section describes recent developments in each of these subject areas, current conditions and trends, and finally presents current thinking on possible future developments. The second part discusses in detail the recommendations outlined in the 1963 Elkton Master Development Plan and indicates where implementation has, and has not, occurred. Also discussed are major issues that remain to be addressed in the current plan.



# BACKGROUND: A BRIEF VIEW OF ELKTON

Elkton, the County Seat of Cecil County, lies at the head of the Elk River near the Maryland/Delaware border. The Town is approximately 45 miles from Baltimore and 20 miles from Wilmington, Delaware.

Elkton, through extensive annexation in the late 1960's and early 1970's, has grown dramatically since the 1963 Plan was produced. At present, the Town covers about six square miles.

Elkton's growth and development has been a function of its location astride major routes of transportation, first water and road, later rail and super highway serving the Eastern Seaboard, and has been a way station on one of the most important transportation corridors on the Eastern Seaboard. Commerce on the Elk River and rail travel gave Elkton early prosperity. In the early 20th century, however, roads became increasingly important and, with the completion of Route 40 in the 1930's, the Town's dependence on the railroad began waning rapidly and became increasingly oriented to the automobile.

At present, Elkton is a hub through which numerous major highways flow. Maryland Routes 7, 279, 213, 40 and 545 all go through the Town. In addition, I-95 lies to the immediate north.

Besides its strong identification with transportation arteries, the Town is increasingly influenced by its location within the Wilmington SMSA. First of all, many Elkton residents work and shop in Delaware. Secondly, Elkton, as well as the rest of northeastern Cecil County, is receiving significant population influx from New Castle County by virtue of its convenient location near the Delaware line. Finally, incomes in the area are appreciably greater than elsewhere in the Upper Shore Region, another indicator of the effects of its metropolitan location.

From a basically rural County Seat, Elkton since World War II has become increasingly industrialized and urbanized. The major recent impetus to this growth and change was the location of the naval munitions plant west of the Town just before World War II. This caused a heavy influx of workers to Elkton and its environs and construction of substantial additional housing there.

After the war many people stayed on to work in the new industries which were locating in the area. Since then, the Town's population, with the exception of a slight decline during the 1960's, has grown steadily. Current population of the Town is estimated to be around 6,350.

Growth will probably continue in Elkton and in the surrounding area. For this reason it is incumbent upon the Town to plan effectively for new growth in addition to upgrading its existing developed areas, such as the downtown business district. The result of this effort will be continued growth and the overall enhancement of the quality of life for Elkton and its residents.





# INTRODUCTION

This document represents the first stage in an overall planning effort designed to update the 1963 Elkton Master Development Plan.

The material presented here consists of two major parts. The first part - the Background Studies - analyzes major factors affecting the future development of the Town of Elkton. These factors include population, economy, housing, community facilities, transportation and land use. Every attempt has been made to update this material from the data published in the 1963 Plan and to determine the future developments and trends in these subject areas as they affect the Town of Elkton.

The second portion of this document details the recommendations given in the 1963 Plan and indicates which of these have been implemented completely or in part since then. Major issues and questions which the new Plan must address are also identified here.

The next phase of the Elkton planning effort will involve the actual writing of the new Plan itself, and updating the Town's zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations. Other planning documents will be developed as necessary.



# PART I

## PLANNING BACKGROUND STUDIES



# SECTION A

## POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

### GENERAL

Elkton lies in the path of urbanization spreading outward from New Castle County in Delaware and also along the Route 40 - I-95 corridor. The election district lying to the north of Elkton and immediately adjacent to New Castle County experienced the highest rate of growth in Cecil County from 1960-1970. Growth restrictions imposed since 1970 by New Castle County and lower land costs in Cecil County, plus other factors, almost certainly insure that "spillover" development originating in Delaware will continue to occur in the Elkton area. Also, the County's encouragement of growth along the Route 40 - I-95 "spine" will exert additional development pressure in the Elkton area. Partially as a result of these growth pressures, the Elkton Election District (ED-3) had, by 1970, become the most populous in the County with its population total of 13,632, representing an increase of 7.3% over the figure for 1960. Also, this election district had become the second most densely populated district in the County.

According to the 1970 Census, the Town of Elkton itself experienced a 10.5% decline in population from 1960-1970, with its number of residents shrinking from 5,989 to 5,362. Still, Elkton remained by far the largest municipality in Cecil County with a population more than twice as large as Perryville, the next largest town.

This decline has since been reversed. By mid 1975, according to estimates prepared by the Internal Revenue Service, the population had increased to approximately 5,900. By the end of 1976, Elkton's population had increased further to an estimated 6,350.\* This rapid population increase since 1970 has been, and will continue to be fueled by the development pressures emanating from Delaware and moving along the Route 40 transportation corridor from Baltimore. The newly adopted Comprehensive Plan for Cecil County, Maryland, recognizes the potential effects of these development pressures in that it identifies and recommends the Elkton Planning Area (to include the Town itself and some acreage surrounding it) as the prime center for future development in the County. This combination of factors, recent population increases, continuing regional growth pressures, and the official recognition of these trends as expressed in the Comprehensive Plan, assures that the Town of Elkton will continue to grow.

### POPULATION - SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

Table 1 indicates the older character of Elkton's population when compared with that of the County and the State. Twenty percent of the population in 1970 was over 55, compared with County and State percentages of 14.8 and 15.8 respectively. The aged dependency ratio was also appreciably higher. In addition, the proportion of persons in the prime childbearing years of 25-44 was somewhat less than that of the other subdivisions shown.

---

\* This estimate is based on the number of estimated 1976 occupied dwelling units in the Town multiplied by the 1970 average of 3.09 persons/dwelling unit.

## Age of Population

TABLE 1

Age Distribution of Population by Percentage:  
Elkton and Selected Subdivisions - 1970

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Upper Shore</u>	<u>Cecil County</u>	<u>Elkton</u>
Under 5	8.8	8.4	9.6	10.2
5-14	20.8	20.0	20.8	18.7
15-24	17.4	17.4	20.5	16.9
25-34	13.4	11.8	12.7	11.0
35-44	12.0	11.0	11.2	10.6
45-54	11.8	11.2	10.4	12.6
55-64	8.2	9.4	7.4	9.6
65 and over	7.6	10.8	7.4	10.4
Aged dependency ratio*	13.4	20.0	13.1	23.2

\* The aged dependency ratio represents the ratio of elderly, presumably retired persons 65 years of age or older to those persons of prime working age, 18-64. A high aged dependency ratio indicates that there is a large dependent population over 65 years of age.

TABLE 2

Age Distribution of the Population of Elkton  
1960 and 1970

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>Change #</u>	<u>Change %</u>
Under 5	778	547	- 231	- 29.7
5-9	597	491	- 106	- 17.8
10-14	508	513	+ 5	+ 1.0
15-19	410	465	+ 55	+ 13.4
20-24	426	443	+ 17	+ 4.0
25-34	854	590	- 264	- 30.9
35-44	811	567	- 244	- 30.1
45-54	620	674	+ 54	+ 8.7
55-64	484	516	+ 32	+ 6.6
65-74	325	339	+ 14	+ 4.3
75+	176	217	+ 41	+ 23.3
	<u>5,989</u>	<u>5,362</u>	<u>- 627</u>	<u>- 10.5</u>

Table 2 further indicates the increasingly older nature of Elkton's population and that this trend had become more evident during the period 1960-1970. The age groups in the prime childbearing years of 20-44 suffered a significant decline of 23.5% (down to 1,600 from 2,091 in 1960). Almost certainly as a result of this decline, there was also a drop of 24.5% in the number of children under ten years of age. As per recent trends nationwide, the number of elderly people, 65 and over, increased by eleven percent from 501 to 556.

The reasons for these declines can be traced to the lower birth rate evident during the Depression and during World War II, and also because of out-migration of those in the younger age brackets.



TABLE 3

Estimated Net Migration for Town of Elkton  
1960-1970\*

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Assumed Survivors of 1960 in 1970</u>	<u>Net Migration</u>	<u>Percent Change</u>
10-14	513	771	- 258	- 33.5
15-19	465	594	- 129	- 21.7
20-24	443	503	- 60	- 12.0
25-34	590	825	- 235	- 28.5
35-44	567	836	- 269	- 32.2
45-54	674	771	- 97	- 12.6
55-64	516	551	- 35	- 6.4
65-74	339	371	- 32	- 8.7
75+	217	210	7	+ 3.3
Totals	4,324	5,432	-1,108	- 20.4
0-4	547			
5-9	491			
Total	5,362			

Table 3 graphically indicates that the 1970 population in the younger age groups was noticeably less than that which would normally be expected if the entire 1960 population had remained in Elkton. Because of out-migration, the total population in age groups from 10 to 44 was 27% less than the number which would have been present if the 1960 population had remained in Elkton. It is apparent that from 1960 to 1970 many young parents with very young children left the Elkton area. Possible causes of this out-migration were a lack of adequate housing (little new residential construction occurred during the decade), and the lack of higher paying jobs within the Elkton area. The latter problem was heightened by the fact that higher wage scales existed in the Wilmington and Baltimore areas.

Since 1970, this aging process may have reversed itself somewhat. New residential development has occurred and some 300 new residential units have been built since 1970. Indications are that younger families are moving into these newer residential subdivisions. Overall, the population of the Town has increased an estimated 1,000 since 1970 and it is probable that younger people comprise a large portion of this increase.

The population of Elkton is homogenous. Only 8.8% of the 1970 population was black, a small increase over 1960. Overall, the 1970 total of 487 non-white persons represented an increase of only nine over 1960. The foreign-born element of the population is very small, with only 44 of the Town's 1970 residents being born outside of the United States.

\* The figure in the "Assumed Survivors of 1960 in 1970" column were obtained by subtracting the number of people in each age group who could be expected to die in the ten year period and determining the number of survivors expected to remain in 1970 provided no out-migration occurred. For example, of the 508 residents of ages 10 to 14 in 1960, 505 should have remained in Elkton in 1970. These individuals would then have been of ages 20-24. Instead, only 443 people in Elkton were of ages 20-24 in 1970 meaning that 62 may have moved elsewhere. This technique gives one a rough idea of the amount of possible in or out-migration in each age group.

The lack of increase in the black population can also be attributed, in large measure, to out-migration of those in younger age groups. This is indicated in the following table.

TABLE 4

Estimated Net Migration for Black Population  
of the Town of Elkton  
1960-1970

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>1970 Population</u>	<u>Assumed Survivors of 1960 in 1970</u>	<u>Net Migration</u>	<u>Percent Change</u>
10-14	62	65	- 3	- 4.6
15-19	46	51	- 5	- 9.8
20-24	6	36	- 30	- 83.3
25-34	12	53	- 41	- 77.4
35-44	44	56	- 12	- 21.4
45-54	52	36	+ 16	+ 44.4
55-59	36	21	+ 15	+ 71.4
60-64	17	23	- 6	- 26.1
65-74	48	16	+ 32	+200
75+	16	8	+ 8	+100
Totals	339	365	- 26	- 7.1
0-4	40			
5-9	93			
Total	472			

These statistics indicate that an estimated 90 persons under 44 years of age may have left the Elkton area between 1960 and 1970. This loss was offset by the excess of births over deaths, plus the probable in-migration of older citizens. It is possible that the younger people may have moved to the Wilmington and Baltimore areas where higher paying jobs are more readily available.

Education

Elkton showed gains over 1960 in education achievement. The percentage of high school graduates was higher, as was the median educational level. These gains, however, lagged behind those of the State as a whole as evidenced by the following comparative statistics for persons over 25 years of age.

TABLE 5

	<u>Percentage of High School Graduates</u>		
	<u>1960</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>% of Change</u>
State	40	52.3	+ 12.3
Elkton	37	40.6	+ 3.6

TABLE 6

	<u>Median Educational Level (Years of Schooling)</u>		
	<u>1960</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>Average Increase</u>
State	10.4	12.1	+ 1.7
Elkton	10.4	10.7	+ .3

One reason for the substantial increase in the State's educational level, however, lies in the in-migration of people to its metropolitan areas. In terms of real educational attainment among its native population, the actual State increase may not be so high.

## POPULATION - ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

### Income

Table 7 compares 1969 median incomes for families and unrelated individuals in Elkton and other jurisdictions.

TABLE 7

#### Annual Median Income, 1970

	<u>Unrelated Individuals</u>	<u>Families</u>
Elkton	\$ 2,425	\$ 9,286
Cecil County	2,186	9,042
Upper Shore	2,014	8,333
State of Maryland	3,099	11,063
Wilmington SMSA	2,762	10,686

The median incomes for families and unrelated individuals for Elkton and Cecil County are higher than for almost anywhere else in the Upper Eastern Shore region. The family income figures were almost halfway between the medians for the Upper Eastern Shore and the Wilmington SMSA, an indication that this urbanized area with its naturally higher income averages is exerting a strong influence on the Town and on the County as a whole.

While the income figures for Elkton were significantly lower than those of the State in 1970, some subsequent income estimates from the Census Bureau indicate that, from 1970 through mid 1974, per capita income in Elkton and in Cecil County rose at almost the same rate as that of the State. From April 1970 to July 1974, per capita income in Elkton rose 48.6% as opposed to 50.9% for the State as a whole, another indication that the Town's metropolitan location is continuing to exert a strong upward influence on personal income.

### Poverty Levels

In Elkton, 9.9% of the families and 31.2% of the unrelated individuals have incomes below the poverty level, a figure slightly higher than the respective figures of 7.7% and 32.1% registered for the State. This percentage of people below poverty level in Elkton, however, is somewhat lower than that for the Upper Eastern Shore and other rural areas of the State, another indication that local income levels are being benefited somewhat by urbanizing trends.

The higher percentage of individuals below poverty level in Elkton as compared to the State can be partially explained by the larger percentage of elderly persons on fixed income living in the Town. This is borne out by the larger aged dependency ratio in Elkton and the fact that 20.4% of the population is on Social Security or railroad retirement income as opposed to 16.4% for the State.



TABLE 8

Occupation of Employed Workers Sixteen and  
Over by Percentage

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	<u>Elkton</u>	<u>Cecil County</u>	<u>Upper Shore</u>	<u>Wilmington SMSA</u>	<u>State</u>
Professional, Technical, etc.	8	11	9	19	18
Managers, Administrative, Except Farms	7	6	6	8	8
Clerical, Sales	20	17	16	24	27
Craftsmen, Foremen, Kindred Workers	11	16	14	15	13
Operatives	30	25	19	16	12
Laborers, Except Farms	5	6	6	4	4
Farm Workers	0	2	7	1	1
Service Workers	16	12	11	11	7
Other	2	5	11	2	11

Source: 1970 Census

TABLE 9

Economic Sectors of Employed  
Town of Elkton

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	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Construction	112	5
Manufacturing	965	43
Transportation	69	3
Communication, Utilities, Sanitary Services	56	2
Wholesale-Retail Trade	396	18
Finance, Insurance, Repair Service	94	4
Professional and Related Services	313	14
Public Administration	123	5
Other Industries	120	5
	<u>2,248</u>	

Source: 1970 Census

TABLE 10

Occupation of Employed  
Town of Elkton

---

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Professional, Technical, Etc.	186	8
Manager/Administrative	163	7
Clerical/Sales	453	20
Craftsmen, Foremen, Kindred Workers	256	11
Operatives	684	30
Laborers, Except Farms	105	5
Farm Workers		
Service Workers	357	16
Other	44	2
	<u>2,248</u>	

Source: 1970 Census

Statistics indicate the predominance of operative and service worker employment for Elkton's population in 1970. As indicated in Table 10, in terms of occupational level, 71% of the Town's work force held jobs in clerical/sales, service, operatives and laborer classifications, compared to 55% for the Wilmington SMSA and 50% for the State of Maryland.

As is predictable from the above, the portion of Elkton's working population employed in the "blue collar" sectors is relatively large. As is indicated in Table 9, 43% of the local work force was employed in manufacturing in 1970 and 18% were employed in wholesale/retail trades. This high percentage of industrial workers is typical in Cecil County, where an increasing percentage of the work force has been employed in the manufacturing sector in recent years.

There is a corresponding lack in the number of Elkton residents employed in managerial or professional categories. Only 15% of the Town's work force were employed in managerial and professional categories in 1970, compared to 26% for the State and 27% for the Wilmington metropolitan area.

The overall picture, therefore, is that Elkton's labor force is employed primarily in the manufacturing, clerical/sales and in the service sectors, and also that it holds mostly lower skilled jobs within these areas. This heavy dependence on blue collar jobs, particularly on the manufacturing sector, has definite economic impacts, particularly during periods of economic downturn. These will be examined in the discussion on the regional and local economy.

# SECTION B

## ECONOMIC FACTORS

### GENERAL

This section of the Elkton background studies examines the regional and local economy, its characteristics, its problems and current and future trends.\* Because Elkton is so closely related to the Wilmington SMSA, a brief examination of this regional economy is included.

#### The Wilmington SMSA and Its Effects on Elkton

The Federal Census of 1970 designated Wilmington and surrounding New Castle County, Delaware; Salem County, New Jersey; and Cecil County, Maryland as a Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA), recognizing this urbanized area's rapid growth in the 1960's. Eighty percent of the population, and most of the employment in this metro area, is concentrated in New Castle County.

In 1970, the SMSA's population had reached almost 500,000. Population growth since then has slackened considerably, as is evidenced by the fact that the latest projections for population growth in New Castle County have been scaled down by almost one-third from estimates made in the early 1970's. This can be attributed in part to the declining birth rate evidenced nationwide. This can also be attributed in part to controls on residential and industrial growth such as the early 1970's sewer moratorium and the environmental constraints on industrial expansion in the County as mandated by Coastal Zone Management Programs. Also, the prospects of cheaper land in Cecil County have encouraged homebuilders and local residents to move into Maryland, thus cutting further into New Castle County's growth potential. These factors, along with the economic rundown evident in the mid 1970's have reduced the rate of population increase in New Castle County.

The economic growth of the overall Wilmington Metro area is also slower than had been projected earlier. The recession/energy crisis, as well as other factors, have combined to produce economic stagnation in the region. Unemployment during 1976 averaged nine percent. Much of this unemployment was concentrated in the manufacturing sector, and particularly in the automobile industry which has experienced significant layoffs in the past few years. In May, 1977, the total manufacturing employment in the SMSA was estimated at 63,800, a figure which is several thousand below the industrial

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\* The statistical data in this section was derived from several sources. Projections of employment in the government, wholesale/retail and manufacturing sectors were obtained from estimates published in the Department of State Planning's publication, "Maryland Projection Series - Population and Employment, 1975-1990". Data on past and present employment in the manufacturing sector was obtained from annual issues of the Department of Economic and Community Development's "Directory of Maryland Manufacturers". Other material on employment, number of firms and sales in wholesale/retail sectors was taken from the Federal Census Bureau's "1972 Census of Wholesale Trade" and the "1972 Census of Retail Trade". Finally, the information on unemployment rates was obtained from the Employment Security Administration of the Maryland Department of Human Resources.



employment reported in 1973. These statistics are particularly important since the Elkton work force depends heavily on Wilmington area manufacturing concerns for employment.

Economic growth in the Wilmington area is not expected to be rapid in the foreseeable future. Growth in the manufacturing sector of New Castle County, for example, is expected to be only 70% of the national average. The major drag on the growth rate in manufacturing employment lies in the automobile industry, the second largest manufacturing activity in the County. Again, this is of particular concern to Elkton because many of its workers depend on the automobile plants around Wilmington for employment.

Elkton, by virtue of its location, is becoming increasingly oriented in its economic life toward New Castle County and the rest of Delaware. Wilmington and Newark, in particular, are exerting increasing influence over Elkton and its surrounding areas.

First of all, a large percentage of Elkton's work force commutes to jobs in the Newark-Wilmington area. In 1970, almost 20% of Elkton's work force commuted to work in Wilmington or elsewhere in New Castle County. While current figures are not available, estimates are that this dependence on Wilmington and the rest of the Delaware job market has increased even more since the Census was taken in 1970. This increase is due in part to a decline in employment opportunities in local manufacturing firms, the higher wages available in Delaware, and also on the fact that many newer residents of Elkton moved from Delaware but still work in their former state of residence.

Secondly, many Elkton residents have traditionally shopped in Newark and Wilmington and continue to do so. The Wilmington-Newark area has a greater variety of merchandise than do shopping areas in Cecil County, and Delaware has no sales tax. The recent opening of the Big Elk Mall, however, may aid Elkton in competing with the shopping areas in Delaware.

In summary, Wilmington, Newark, and the rest of New Castle County have become a strong magnet for Elkton area shoppers as well as for a significant percentage of its work force. Since Elkton's dependence on Wilmington and the surrounding area is likely to increase, it is important that population and economic trends in the SMSA as a whole continue to be watched very closely.

#### LOCAL ECONOMY: EXISTING CONDITIONS AND TRENDS

The Town of Elkton represents a major focal point in the economy of Cecil County. It is the government and manufacturing center of the County and also the largest single wholesale/retail hub.

#### The Government Sector

As the County seat, Elkton has within or near its boundaries virtually all State and County agencies operating in Cecil County. In the Elkton area are located the Circuit and District Courts as well as Court related agencies such as Parole and Probation and Juvenile Services. In addition, Social Services and Employment Security, the County Health Department, Assessment Office, and most other agencies of State and County government have their offices in or adjacent to Elkton.

The Federal government is represented by a small complex on High Street

housing offices of the Social Security Administration and the U.S. Soil Conservation Service.

Overall government employment in Cecil County, even with the closing of Bainbridge Naval Training Center, has continued to rise in recent years. State and local government employment increased by some 200 in the County from 1970 through 1975. The many State and local agencies in Elkton have accounted for a large portion of this increase.

On the other hand, Federal employment has not grown in Cecil County mainly because of the on-going phase-out of Bainbridge, although Elkton was not as severely affected by this development as were other areas in the western half of the County. This is partially due to the fact that the percentage of Federal employees in Elkton area Census Tracts is lower than most other portions of Cecil County.

Department of State Planning projections indicate an increase of 700 to 800 government employees in Cecil County between now and 1990, most of these being with State and local governments. Because Elkton is the County Seat and is also a high growth area, the Town can probably expect an increase of at least several hundred jobs in the government sector during the 1980's. The planned construction of the Elkton District Court/Multi-Service Center in the late 1970's or early 1980's will serve to enhance Elkton's attractiveness to government agencies. Availability of office space in this new facility will encourage agencies which have left the downtown area for lack of office space to return, and will also attract additional agencies as well.

#### The Wholesale/Retail Sector

Elkton has traditionally been the dominant force in the commercial life of Cecil County and continues to exert strong influence there. The following statistics taken from the "1972 Census of Wholesale and Retail Trade" indicate the Town's importance within Cecil County. At that time, Elkton contained 145 of the County's 451 retail establishments (32%), employing 41% of the retail employees and capturing 41% of the total retail sales in the County. This latter figure is slightly down from the 43% registered in the late 1950's and early 1960's when the Elkton Master Plan was completed. While some businesses have left the downtown area since that time, the Big Elk Mall on Route 40 has more than compensated for the loss, and Elkton still remains the dominant center of retail sales.

In terms of wholesale trade, Elkton in 1972 had 19 of 43 wholesale establishments, 44% of wholesale employment, and 46% of total wholesale sales in the County.

Elkton, as the center of commercial activity in the County, draws customers from many areas outside its boundaries. In 1972, Elkton, with approximately 10% of the County's population, captured 41% of its retail sales and 46% of its wholesale sales.

While the old downtown area of Elkton is becoming increasingly oriented to service-type activities and thus is catering more toward local need, the new Big Elk Mall has assumed the role as a regional shopping center outlet drawing patrons from eastern and southern Cecil County and also from Delaware.

The future of the wholesale/retail sector in Elkton appears to be bright.



County trends indicate that employment in the wholesale/retail sector will increase by 34% between now and 1990. If Elkton's wholesale and retail outlets continue to employ the same high percentage of employees as in the past, some 415 additional jobs will be created in this sector in the Elkton area by 1990. Current plans call for expansion of both the Big Elk Mall and the commercial area along Route 213. These developments indicate that continued expansion can indeed be expected in the wholesale and retail trade areas.

All of these developments are of importance to the Town. First of all, a significant portion (18% in 1970) of the local work force is employed in wholesale and retail trade. Therefore, the anticipated increase in jobs in this field would be of particular benefit to this segment of the population. In a larger sense, expansion of the wholesale/retail sector will enable Elkton to compete more successfully with Delaware for the sales dollar. If the old downtown area can be strengthened economically, Elkton will be in an even stronger position as a trade center.

### Manufacturing Sector

While government and wholesale/retail trade are important to the Town, the most important sector in terms of local employment is manufacturing. Elkton is the manufacturing center of the County. Of the 54 industrial employers in Cecil County in 1974, 35 were located in Elkton, and these concerns employed 71% of the County's manufacturing work force. The manufacturing sector in Elkton, given great impetus by the extensive ordinance production during World War II, continued to grow during the 1950's and 1960's and transformed the Elkton area economy from an agricultural orientation to primarily manufacturing/industrial in nature. Of the Town's existing industrial concerns, virtually all have been established since World War II.

Elkton has, as a result of this trend, become increasingly dependent on industrial employment. From 1950, when 29% of the labor force was employed in manufacturing, the percentage increased to 37% in 1960 and 43% in 1970.

Such a dependence on manufacturing can have its drawbacks because this sector is extremely sensitive to economic conditions and fluctuations and can become seriously depressed during periods of economic downturn. During the economic expansion of the 1960's, Elkton's industrial base fared well and, as a result, manufacturing employment jumped drastically, rising from 2,221 in 1960 to 3,327 in 1970, an increase of 33%. By 1972, however, employment in manufacturing began declining in both Elkton and in the Wilmington SMSA, and this decline quickened with the 1974-1975 recession. Heavy layoffs have occurred in the Chrysler and General Motors plants near Wilmington, and steep drops have also occurred in manufacturing employment of Elkton area firms. Manufacturing employment of Elkton's industrial concerns stood at 2,853 in 1974, a 14% decline from the 1970 peak period. Since that time, virtually every major manufacturing concern has cut back even further.

The result of these cutbacks has been a high unemployment rate, varying from eight percent to over nine percent in the Elkton area. Discussions with the local Employment Security office indicate that the manufacturing work force has been particularly hard hit in the recent economic downturn. As indicated earlier, this downturn has been evident throughout the Wilmington region.

Reasons for the decline in Elkton's manufacturing employment include:

- 1) technical advances resulting in elimination of low skilled factory jobs -

a national phenomenon; 2) cutbacks in government contracts on which several major local industrial firms have depended heavily; 3) the recession and "energy crisis" and its overall effects on the region.

The future of the manufacturing sector in Elkton is unclear. Local sources are confident of an upturn but are uncertain of when and of the degree of improvement that can be expected. Discussions with several large employers indicate that no real plant expansions are scheduled, leading one to believe that the situation is guarded at this time.

Foreseeable trends in the Wilmington SMSA and in the State of Maryland are also guarded. As indicated earlier, growth in the Wilmington SMSA, particularly in the manufacturing sector, is not expected to be rapid. Also, Department of State Planning projections indicate that overall manufacturing employment in Maryland will increase little, if any, in terms of total jobs between now and 1990. According to these Department projections, Cecil County shows a slight decline in overall manufacturing employment by 1990, although slight advances can be expected in several sectors in which significant Elkton area manufacturing concerns are concentrated. A total of approximately 400 new jobs are expected to be created in the ordnance, apparel and rubber/plastic industries in Cecil County by 1990. Each of these sectors are important to Elkton since they, along with the R M R Corporation, a producer of electric motors, and the General Cable Company, a manufacturer of building and electric cables, employ most of the Town's manufacturing workers.

Besides some hopeful trends in these key sectors, two other developments may aid in improving the outlook for the Town's manufacturing workers. The first is the recent opening of the PNR Rail Car Service, a concern which repairs railroad rolling stock. While employment numbers only about 35 at the present time, this could expand to 300-400 employees by 1979 because PNR is the only rolling stock repair firm in the mid-Atlantic region. Another major positive development is the possible location of a regional Coca-Cola bottling plant in Elkton. This concern could also employ hundreds of people if it locates in the area. Overall, indicators in the manufacturing sector are mixed insofar as future advances are concerned. While declines could occur on regional and Statewide basis, there is some optimism that the local picture could improve.

## THE FUTURE

Elkton has numerous attributes which favor its economic growth in the future. They are, briefly: 1) the Town's advantageous regional location between Wilmington and Baltimore and access to major transportation arteries make it a magnet for future industrial and commercial development; 2) Elkton is, and will be, the major center of population growth in the County, an attribute which makes it attractive to both industrial and retail firms; 3) the local labor force, with its high percentage of operatives and craftsmen, is an asset in attracting industry. Also, the high percentage of retail/sales workers would make the Town attractive to wholesale and retail concerns seeking qualified employees; 4) large parcels of vacant land are available within and immediately adjacent to the Town for use by industrial and commercial outlets requiring a great deal of operating room.

The 1975 Cecil County Community Economic Inventory produced by the Department of Economic and Community Development, identified several major sites in or near Elkton on which industrial concerns could locate. A majority of this industrial land is located in the area west of Route 213 between the Penn Cen-



tral Railroad and Route 279. The three major parcels in this area, each one of 15 acres or larger in size, have only one owner, are level, and have major road or railway access. Another parcel of 40 acres lies to the east of the Town at the junction of Muddy Lane and the Penn Central Railroad tracks. All sites are zoned industrial.

The Overall Economic Development Plan for Cecil County, adopted by the County Commissioners in 1974, recommended that each community be analyzed in order to determine which types of industry would be most compatible with the local industrial/commercial mix, and which would supply adequate employment to the local labor force. The document also recommends that when these "target industries" are identified, efforts should be made to attract them to the appropriate municipality.

Because Elkton is the County's center of manufacturing and government employment and is also the major retail center, it is important to the County's economic well-being that such an analysis be conducted for the Town. It is particularly important for Elkton that such a study be made because of the uncertainty of future employment opportunities in Wilmington and the consequent need for increased local employment opportunities to offset the possible loss of jobs region-wide. Also, additional locally based industry is necessary to offset the negative fiscal impacts created by the influx of Delaware residents into the Elkton area and the fact that the Town and its environs could become increasingly a "bedroom community" to Delaware.

## THE ELKTON CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

### Current Issues and Problems

When the 1963 Plan was completed, downtown Elkton was the County's dominant retail center as well as its major center of government and professional offices. At that time, the only major competition for the retail dollar came from shopping centers in Wilmington and Newark. Business outlets along Route 40 at that time consisted mostly of gasoline stations, motels, and roadside restaurants serving the highway traveler.

At the present time, downtown Elkton is no longer the County's dominant retail center. It is receiving strong competition from Delaware and, most recently, from the Big Elk Mall. Since the opening of the Mall in 1976, major concerns such as the Acme Food Store and Read's Drugstore, along with several smaller enterprises, have moved from the downtown area and are located in the Mall itself or elsewhere along Route 40. As a result of this business defection and the other recent business expansion along Route 40, the commercial life of the Town is increasingly shifting south toward that artery.

The downtown area has also lost some major State government offices, namely Social Services and Employment Security, in the past year. These agencies have moved to new rented quarters on or near Route 40. This gravitation of commercial and governmental activity to the Route 40 area is in keeping with the overall direction of growth to the south in recent years.

As a result of this movement from the downtown area, there are several empty storefronts on Main Street as well as a large area at Railroad and North Avenues which is partially abandoned as a result of moves by the Acme and Read's stores, the Exxon gas station and the closing of the old Elkton Elementary School. Recently the Read's Store has been occupied by a furniture outlet and construction has begun on a High's Dairy Store at the inter-

section of Railroad Avenue and North Street. These developments have helped reverse the trend toward abandonment of this area.

The remaining activities in the downtown area are increasingly oriented toward local service-type functions and professional and government offices. A survey of the downtown area bordered by Bridge Street and the Courthouse on the west and east respectively, and by Railroad Avenue and Howard Street on the north and south, indicate that of the 112 commercial outlets in the area, only 45 are retail or wholesale establishments. The rest are professional offices, banking and insurance concerns and small service-type firms, such as beauty parlors, barber shops and eating places. In addition to the above, there are numerous locations housing government offices; a total of 13 government office locations were noted in the downtown area.

While some improvements have been made in the downtown circulation pattern since the old Plan, and parking has also been expanded since then, the Elkton CBD faces much the same types of problems as it did in the early 1960's. These include:

- a) Continued auto congestion along Main Street;
- b) Lack of selection in merchandise;
- c) Lack of "name" stores;
- d) A run-down appearance in places; and
- e) Obsolete structures for modern merchandising.

If the flight of businesses continues and patrons continue to forsake the downtown in favor of other shopping areas, the central business district will undergo even more serious deterioration than it has to date. The results will be costly to the Town in both social and economic terms.

#### The Future of the CBD

Whether downtown Elkton could, or should, be revived into a major retail center is problematical. First of all, there are no large open parcels of land in the central business district which could accommodate a modern shopping center with its attendant parking facilities. Although space might possibly be made available on Railroad Avenue if several large buildings, now abandoned, are razed, this area also lies beyond the immediate downtown area and a shopping center there might cause a further drain on the central business district. The Railroad Avenue-North Street area might better be used for warehousing and/or light industrial activity since this sector is relatively isolated from residential neighborhoods and has ample parking with good road access. A second obstacle to developing a large retail concentration in the downtown area is that it would aggravate the traffic congestion existing on several major streets. Finally, there is no guarantee that such a complex, even if built, could compete successfully with the Big Elk Mall or the Delaware shopping centers.

It appears, therefore, that the future of the downtown area is that of a regional government and professional center and that its commercial makeup will consist mainly of local service establishments plus small retail concerns which compliment rather than compete with their larger counterparts on Route 40.

While downtown Elkton definitely has problems at the present time, some consolation lies in the fact that the Big Elk Mall does lie within the municipal boundaries and that the municipality can at least benefit from the tax revenue generated therein. This is not the case in many other small towns where shopping centers in surrounding counties often drain both business life and tax dollars. As stated before, however, it is still essential that the central business district undergo substantial economic revitalization in order for the overall economic health of the Town to be assured.



# SECTION C

## HOUSING ELEMENT

### GENERAL HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

#### Composition of the Housing Stock

In 1960, total dwelling units totaled 1,831. The 1960's saw demolition of 112 mostly older units in connection with urban renewal and road extensions in the downtown area. Little new residential construction occurred during the decade, as only 54 dwelling units were added to the Town's housing stock. A small number of these were brought into the Town as part of the numerous municipal annexations during this period. As a result, the total housing stock did not increase as had been expected. With the accelerated residential construction activities of the early 1970's however, the number of dwelling units again increased and, as of 1976, numbered an estimated 2,084.

Elkton's housing, as in the case of most towns in the rural counties, is of an older vintage. The 1970 Census indicates that 1,468, or 70% of the total dwelling units within the Town, were built before 1950. Of this total, 878 predated 1940.

Also, Elkton's housing is predominantly single-family in nature, a trend which has continued in the 1970's with almost all of the 311 new housing units being single-family residences.

The single-family emphasis is likely to change somewhat in the future as several planned residential developments are scheduled to include approximately 780 garden apartments. While all of these developments may not be built or are several years away even if constructed, it is apparent that the market exists for these apartment units. First of all, the vacancy rate in apartments within the Town is very low. Also, the high number of elderly people in Elkton and the relatively low income structure of its residents, among other things, combine to make apartments a desirable alternative in an era of sky-rocketing costs of single-family homes. The key, of course, is for potential developers to insure that rents are not too high for the local market.

#### Structural Conditions

The 1960 Census listed totals of dwelling units considered to be sound, deteriorating (needing above average repair to provide safe and adequate shelter) and dilapidated (having housing that does not provide adequate shelter and endangers its occupants). The 1970 Census tabulations do not

The discussion and analysis in this section combines material for the 1960 and 1970 Census of Housing, along with 1976 and 1977 estimates of local housing conditions completed by Mullin and Longran Associates as part of this consultant firm's preparation of Elkton's Housing Assistance Plan. Disparities exist between the 1960 and 1970 Census in terms of the age of the Town's housing stock and the comparative amounts of single-family and multi-family housing. For this reason, trends in housing could not be as clearly defined as had been hoped. The material presented, however, should give an accurate picture of the housing situation in Elkton.



use this terminology. However, the consultant's 1975 estimates in the Housing Assistance Plan do estimate the number of units considered to be substandard.

In 1960, a total of 397 dwelling units were considered to be substandard (deteriorating or dilapidated), while in 1975 the figure stood at an estimated 248, or approximately 12% of the housing stock. This reduction resulted from demolition conducted with urban renewal and road extension, natural disasters, and also from rehabilitation of existing housing. A great deal of the demolition activity occurred in the late 1960's and early 1970's in the East High Street area immediately north of the Courthouse. Much of this clearing was done when South Street was extended.

No further major urban renewal projects are planned to eliminate substandard units. Current Town policy is to utilize the housing code to reduce the number of deteriorating units and to demolish dilapidated structures when they become vacant.

### Vacancy

Vacancy rates for residential units in Elkton have been low in recent years as is indicated in the following chart.

TABLE 11

#### Vacancy Rates 1960 - 1975

<u>Year</u>	<u>Vacant Units</u>	<u>Percent Vacant</u>
1960	83	4.5
1970	56	3.1
1975 (est.)	64	3.2

Apartments in particular do not remain vacant long once an occupant has departed.

### Persons Per Room

A dwelling unit is considered to be overcrowded when there are a greater number of persons living there than there are rooms in the unit itself. While there are no current figures on overcrowding, statistics from previous censuses indicate that the problem had been alleviated somewhat from 1960 to 1970. In 1960, there were more than 1.01 persons per room in 14.5% (253 of 1,748) occupied dwelling units; while in 1970, the percentage of overcrowding units had dropped to 9.4% (161 of 1,717).

### THE NEEDS OF LOW INCOME RESIDENTS

In completing the 1976 Housing Assistance Plan (HAP), the consultants estimated the number of individuals and families living in inadequate housing and the number who would need assistance in terms of low income or elderly/handicapped housing. The following table summarizes the consultant's estimates concerning the number of households in inadequate living quarters:

TABLE 12

Households With Inadequate Living Conditions

	<u>White</u>	<u>Black</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Total</u>
Nonelderly Owner Occupied	33	15	-	48
Nonelderly Renter Occupied	<u>94</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>119</u>
Subtotal	127	38	2	167
-----				
Elderly Owner Occupied	36	16	-	52
Elderly Renter Occupied	<u>32</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>45</u>
Subtotal	68	28	1	97
-----				
Grand Total	195	66	3	264

In addition, 169 residents are disabled and are unable to work. Thus, these individuals must also be considered as requiring housing assistance. These individuals will require housing suitable for the elderly.

To meet the needs of low income residents, the Town has constructed three housing projects for low income/elderly people in recent years. Windsor Village, located between Locust Lane and the Penn-Central railroad tracks, consists of 50 duplex units with two to three bedrooms each. Average monthly rental is approximately eighty-nine dollars. Sheffield Park, located near Bridge Street and Gilpin Avenue, also consists of 50 units and serves larger families. Most of these units have four bedrooms and some have as many as five. This project opened in 1974 and charges an average rental of \$84.50 per month. Elkton's elderly housing project, opened in 1973, consists of 50 units and is located on Main Street. Average monthly rental for elderly housing is fifty-six dollars.

It is the policy of the Elkton Housing Authority that first priority for admission to subsidized housing projects lies with Town residents, although the official service area of these developments extends approximately ten miles from the Town. In some instances, particularly for the larger family units in Sheffield Park, tenants are accepted from beyond the 10 mile radius because local demand for these units is not great. Currently, Elkton's low income housing projects are the only ones in the County, thus demands for inclusion by disadvantaged County residents is understandably strong.

Demand for low income housing, particularly for two to three bedroom units, is increasing. Of the 214 families currently awaiting admission to the low income projects, 201 are in need of housing with one to three bedroom units. The strong demand for low income housing originating from elsewhere in the County is shown by the fact that one-half of the families currently on the waiting list are not Elkton residents. The two existing low income housing projects have no further room for expansion on the current sites. Therefore, any increase in units would require acquisition of new land.

The elderly housing project on Main Street presently has a waiting list of 35 people. Because of Elkton's increasingly large concentration of elderly individuals, this pressure can be expected to increase in the future. While the project can expand if need be, no current plans for such expansion exist.



# SECTION D

## COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

### GENERAL

Since the ramifications of a comprehensive plan will affect all land uses and scope of development in Elkton in future years, it is important that existing and proposed public facilities and services be inventoried and analyzed so that their future influence may be determined. This section describes the following community facilities and services: utilities, public safety, education, health care, social services, recreation and solid waste disposal.

### UTILITIES

#### The Existing System - Sewerage

The Elkton system consists primarily of two major sewerage treatment plants and a collection system with pipe lines varying from 6" to 24" in diameter. With the exception of Hollingsworth Manor, which is served by a sewerage pumping station, the entire Town area is served by gravity sewers. The combined systems serve approximately 7600 people at this time.

The Elkton Municipal Sewage Treatment Plant currently serves some 6,150 persons located mainly in the "old" section of Town north of the Big Elk Creek and also those in Hollingsworth Manor. In addition, the Municipal Plant serves the newly constructed Big Elk Mall. This plant does not provide service outside of the Town boundaries. Current Town policy requires that areas served by the Town's water or sewage treatment facilities must be annexed.

The Municipal Plant currently provides secondary treatment to sewerage effluent. Treated effluent from the Municipal Plant is discharged into the Big Elk Creek. Capacity at the Plant is 1.35 mgd and it is currently treating approximately 840,000 gpd., a figure representing some 65% of its total capacity. Peak flows, however, are 1.38 mgd, thus slightly overtaxing the Plant's capacity. These peak flows occur during periods of heavy rainfall and result primarily from the problems of infiltration and in-flow which beset the municipal system. The Town is currently preparing a Facilities Plan to address this infiltration and in-flow problem.

Holly Hall Treatment Plant, located just southeast of Elkton Landing below Route 40, provides secondary treatment to approximately 140,000 gpd, and currently utilizes approximately 35% of its .40 mgd capacity. This plant, formerly privately owned, was purchased by the Town in 1973. It serves approximately 1,450 persons residing both within and beyond the Town boundaries. Since purchase by the Town, the Holly Hall facility can only serve areas which have become part of Elkton. Service will thus no longer be extended from this facility to unincorporated areas. Holly Hall serves mostly the newly developed areas south of the Big Elk Creek to include Buck Hill Farms, Trinity Village, Thomson Estates, Elkwood Estates, the Normira area and the Holly Hall Terrace developments. Treated effluent is discharged into a tributary of the Big Elk Creek. Sludge from this facility, as well as from the old Municipal Plant, is transported to the County landfill.

Private utilities in the area are C.E.C.O. Utility serving Manchester Park, north of Elkton, the TRINCO AND THIOKOL treatment plants serving these two industrial complexes, and the Meadowview Utility Plant serving the Meadowview Park development north of Elkton.

### The Existing System - Water Distribution

The Elkton water system is also a two-part affair with service areas almost identical to those of the two sewage treatment plants. The existing municipal plant also serves the TRINCO Industrial Park. The combined population served is approximately 7,600 - 6,150 being served by the Municipal Plant and 1,450 by the Holly Hall facility. The old municipal system draws approximately 1.5 mgd from the Big Elk Creek, while the Holly Hall facility takes water from three wells located south of Route 40.

### Future Demand - Sewage Treatment

The following chart, taken from the 1975 Comprehensive Water and Sewer Plan for Cecil County, indicates the scope of future demand for sewage treatment.

TABLE 13

#### Sewage Treatment Demand

	<u>1975</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1985</u>	<u>1990</u>
Elkton Municipal Plant (capacity 1.35 mgd)				
Population Served	6,150	10,000	14,000	20,000
Demand (mgd)	.74	1.20	1.68	2.40
Holly Hall Utilities (capacity .40 mgd)				
Population Served	1,450	4,000	5,300	7,000
Demand (mgd)	.13	.36	.48	.63

Currently, neither treatment plant is overtaxed although peak flows during heavy rains slightly overtax the Municipal Plant. Both treatment plants, however, will need expansion in capacity after the year 1980. The Town's sewer line network, like those of other older municipalities, is beset with infiltration and in-flow difficulties, particularly in the older areas of Elkton. The extra demand placed on the pipe systems as a result of this leakage cuts their potential capacity to handle sewage effluent, although the exact degree of this problem is not currently known. An outside consultant will survey the entire system in upcoming months to ascertain the exact magnitude of the infiltration and in-flow problems, and will also recommend improvements in the system.

### Future Demand - Water Service

The following chart, also taken from the 1975 Water and Sewer Plan for Cecil County, indicates the scope of future demands for water service:



TABLE 14

Water Demand

	<u>1975</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>
Elkton Municipal Plant (capacity 1.5 mgd)				
Population Served	6,150	10,000	14,000	20,000
Demand (mgd)	.80	1.65	2.31	3.30
Holly Hall Utilities (capacity .40 mgd)				
Population Served	1,450	4,000	5,300	7,000
Demand (mgd)	.13	.36	.48	.63

As can be seen from these charts, capacity at water treatment plants will have to be increased after 1980 in order to serve the growing population demand. In addition, new supplies of water will be required in order to meet these expected needs.

To meet this demand, new sources of water will have to be found. The first alternative, pumping water from the Susquehanna River, is considered to be too expensive at this time. Another possibility being mentioned is to expand the well system in the south Elkton area. Groundwater potential of the area from the Big Elk Creek south is considered to be greater than the quantity developed to date. Wells with yields of 500-700 gallons per minute are possible in this area, while existing wells only draw 120-350 gallons per minute. The largest water supply lies near Holly Hall Estates.

A problem exists here in that heavy demand is also being placed on these underground water supplies in Delaware. This presents a problem because no agreements have been negotiated which will allow cooperative utilization of this resource in the two states. For this reason, the heavy development in New Castle County, Delaware, may result in both depletion and pollution of these groundwater resources and greatly reduce their potential and availability in the Elkton area in the years to come. A third alternative for increasing water supply is a proposal under which an impoundment reserve would be constructed on the Big Elk Creek north of Manchester Park. This project is currently being held up by Chester County in Pennsylvania because proposed dam construction to effect the impoundment would possibly create water back-up into Pennsylvania, resulting in flooding during periods of heavy rains. An alternative presently being considered by Cecil County is to create a smaller scale impoundment on Big Elk Creek so that the flooding problem would not occur. The County is currently considering these options.

The future course of action to be taken by the County regarding increased supplies of water in the Elkton area may well depend on the results of a study now being conducted. This study, to be completed in 1977, is intended to document water needs, both present and future, and also to make recommendations for meeting these requirements. Because water supplies are essential to the future growth of the Town of Elkton, the County's decision in this regard will have a great impact on Elkton's future development.

## Conclusions

The 1975 Water and Sewer Plan population projections for the Elkton area are derived from those projections found in the County's Comprehensive Plan. If the Elkton area is actually to grow to this level, water and sewerage infrastructure must be provided well beyond the area currently served. In addition to the service needs in the currently undeveloped areas within the Town, there are areas presently outside of the Town, particularly to the north and east, which must be served in order for significant population growth to occur there.

If Elkton extends its facilities to cover these areas and serve the projected population, substantial capital investments must be made in upgrading both treatment facilities and distribution/collection networks. Among major improvements which must be made within the next ten years are expansions to the municipal water filtration and sewage treatment plants (and/or construction of new facilities), expansion of the well system in the south of Town, and construction of major interceptors along the Big and/or Little Elk Creeks, particularly if development occurs to the north. In addition, several elevated water tanks and pumping stations will be required in order to serve areas in the northern and southern ends of Town.

When the current facility plan studies being conducted by the Town and County are completed, local officials will hopefully have sufficient information on which to base their decisions on future infrastructure expansion.

## PUBLIC SAFETY

### The Elkton Police

The Elkton Municipal Police Headquarters is located at 110 North Street next to the Town Hall. The Force currently includes 11 full-time and two part-time persons. The police provide basic protection services to the Town and, when requested by the State Police or County Sheriff, provide backup services to areas outside of the Town such as Holly Hall Estates.

Based on a standard of one policeman per 400 citizens, Elkton's police force is insufficient to serve the Town. However, aid is also provided upon request by the State Police. Among services provided by the State Police are assistance in criminal investigations, traffic, and law enforcement. They also provide backup patrol and other police services when requested by the Town. The Town police force maintains constant communication with the State Police and Sheriff's Office and, with the aid of these law enforcement agencies, provides adequate service to local residents. Discussions with the staff of the Governor's Commission on Law Enforcement also indicate that the level of police service in Elkton at present is more than adequate.

The Chief of Police indicates that demand for service is increasing rapidly, particularly for guards to escort businessmen carrying money and also from citizens requesting after hours patrols. As need grows, additional personnel will undoubtedly be required.

The headquarters building, in terms of office space, is adequate now and for the foreseeable future. Police cars must park on North Street since no other parking area exists in the immediate vicinity of the headquarters building.



## County Sheriff's Office

The County Sheriff's Office is located at 214 North Street. Presently, the Office employs 19 full-time personnel and 20 part-time volunteers. These personnel perform a variety of duties, among them being criminal investigations, arrests and the serving of various legal papers.

Currently, demands on the Sheriff's Office are rapidly increasing and, for this reason, personnel increases will certainly be required. While space is adequate now, new quarters may be needed in the future.

## County Jail

The Sheriff's Office, in addition to its other duties, operates the County Jail. The Jail, which can accommodate 70, is currently being utilized almost at capacity. Also, the building by virtue of poor layout, inadequate plumbing, and overcrowding in some cases, is considered to be inadequate by State standards and is slated for replacement. The County has commissioned an architect to study the feasibility of constructing a new facility on the same site.

Parking at the Jail is more than adequate and will probably remain so even if the current facility is expanded. A large parking lot is located behind the Jail for use by employees and visitors.

## Fire Protection

All fire protection in Elkton and the surrounding area is provided by the Singerly Fire Company, a private volunteer organization which also provides rescue and ambulance services. Singerly operates two firehouses in Elkton, one located at 215 North Street and the other at 300 Newark Avenue near Route 213. Both branches respond to each fire unless one notifies the other that no assistance is required. The fire company also has reciprocal fire fighting arrangements with surrounding communities.

Because of recent rapid development in the northeastern portion of the County, demand is steadily increasing for fire protection. To meet this rapidly growing demand, a new fire station is being constructed in the Kenmore area, approximately one mile south of Fair Hill. This new facility, which will be completed in the Fall of 1977, will provide fire and rescue services to the rapidly developing northeastern area of Cecil County.

The current detachment strength of the Singerly Fire Company is 180 volunteers, of which about 40 are active. Both existing fire stations are adequate in terms of space.

## Civil Defense

The Office of Civil Defense is located in the Courthouse. It performs regular civil defense duties for the County and also maintains a 24 hour communication center from which police, fire, ambulance, and other emergency services can be summoned.

Presently the Office employs nine full-time and six/seven part-time personnel. Although emergency calls and other demands are increasing in volume, space is considered to be adequate now and for the near future.



## State Police

The Maryland State Police conduct police operations in the unincorporated areas of the County and provide assistance in Elkton when requested by the Town Police.

## Armory

The Elkton National Guard Armory, originally constructed in 1915, will undergo extensive renovation during Fiscal 1979 and will continue to be utilized by National Guard units in the Elkton area.

## EDUCATION

### Elkton Area Schools and Capacities

The following public schools serve Elkton and the immediate surrounding area:

TABLE 15

#### Public School Facilities

	Capacity <u>12/76</u>	Enrollment <u>9/76</u>	Excess Capacity	Anticipated* Enrollment <u>1980</u>	Site Acreage <u></u>
Elkton High	1,175	1,300	(-125) <sup>A</sup>	1,428	37.3
Elkton Middle	625	583	42	594	14.0
Cherry Hill Middle	875	576	299	624	50.0
Gilpin Manor Elem.	358	321	37	273	11.4
Thomson Estates Elementary	720	466	254	684	17.0
Holly Hall Elem.	495	397	98	410	15.0
**Cecil Manor Elem.	260	394	(-134) <sup>B</sup>	631	9.8
**Kenmore Elem.	120	240	(-120) <sup>B</sup>	232	9.2
Leeds Elem.	<u>465</u>	<u>317</u>	148	<u>357</u>	16.5
TOTALS	5,093	4,594		5,233	

SOURCE: Departments of Education for Maryland and for Cecil County.

NOTES:

- \* Assuming that no redistricting occurs.
- \*\* These schools funnel students into Elkton Middle and High School but do not serve the Town's elementary school population.
- A. Overcrowded at present.
- B. Overcrowded - use temporary classrooms to accommodate students.

Of these schools, an elementary, middle and high school are located within the Town boundaries along with a private school. The most recently constructed school, Thomson Estates Elementary School, lies outside of the Town limits.

As is evident, the schools serving Elkton's elementary school population are all operating below capacity. Some overcrowding does exist at the Elkton High School. With the exception of this overcrowding at the High School, all school buildings and sites serving Elkton's student population are adequate to meet current needs.

#### Other Educational Opportunities

In addition to the above, the Cecil County Community College, several major private secondary schools, and a vocational technical school provide additional educational opportunities and services for residents of Elkton and the rest of the County.

#### Current Developments

The old Elkton Elementary School, located on Railroad Avenue, was abandoned at the end of the 1975 school year. A portion built during the 1950's is currently being used by the Cecil County Community College. However, the College will be leaving within a few years. Current plans call for demolition of the existing building and construction on this site of the Cecil Center for the Severely and Profoundly Handicapped. This facility will be constructed in 1979 or 1980.

In addition, the Gilpin Manor Elementary School will be expanded in 1977 to accommodate approximately 60 moderately handicapped students plus other students as well.

In effort to alleviate the overcrowding in Elkton's High School, Cecil County will be constructing a new high school in Chesapeake City in the late 1970's and will convert the existing Middle/High School there to a Middle School. The County is also phasing in a redistricting of the Elkton High School/Northeast High School service areas in order to reduce pressure on the former. Combined, these two developments will eliminate the overcrowding problems at the Elkton High School facility.

#### Future Demand

Both the State and Cecil County Board of Education forecast a 10 to 14% increase in public school enrollment in the Elkton area by 1980. With the exception of the aforementioned projects, the County sees no necessity to expand its public school system to meet this increased demand. The overcrowding at the Elkton High School and the Cecil Manor and Kenmore Elementary Schools will be relieved by means of redistricting and the new High School construction mentioned earlier.

If unforeseen demand necessitates additions to existing schools, the sites on which Gilpin Manor, Holly Hall, and Thomson Estates Elementary Schools are located could accommodate the physical expansion of these facilities. This is particularly important since these three schools, two of which lie in the rapidly growing southern areas, serve almost all of Elkton. While the Middle and High Schools cannot expand on their current sites, County plans for additional school construction will hopefully reduce enrollment pressures and make such expansion unnecessary.

To sum up, in terms of school capacity, Elkton appears to be adequately serviced for now and in the foreseeable future.



## PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Cecil County Library is located on East Main Street just outside of the Central Business District. This Library, with a collection of over 74,000 volumes, offers a wide range of library services to the residents of Elkton as well as the area surrounding the Town.

The Library is severely cramped at its current location and requires a great deal of additional space in order to expand its services. At the present time a new site for the Library is being sought.

## HEALTH CARE

### Institutional Care

The Town is served by Union Hospital, an enlarged and modernized facility that compares favorably with many hospitals found in larger cities. Services at the Hospital include pathology, x-ray, surgery, out-patient care, emergency services and isotope therapy treatment.

Union Hospital has recently been enlarged and work on a new addition was completed in January, 1977. The site, covering approximately four acres, is of sufficient size to accommodate the building itself, plus landscaping and necessary parking. While no firm plans for additional expansion exist, discussions with hospital officials indicate that service demands may necessitate further expansion in the future. In that event, additional land would have to be obtained.

Parking at the hospital is not adequate at this time. However, the purchase of additional land for parking facilities will alleviate this parking shortage.

Elkton is also served by a private nursing home which accommodates 43 elderly residents. Because of increasing needs for care for the elderly, officials at the home would like to expand the facility, but at this time no expansion is contemplated. Parking at the nursing home, located at 224 East Main Street, is considered adequate. An additional nursing facility with 110 beds is currently under construction. This new nursing home, located on Bridge Street, will be open by the end of 1977.

### Public Health Services

The Cecil County Health Department, located in the Courthouse, offers personal health services, child care, maternity care, family planning, venereal disease control, tuberculosis treatment and mental health care. It also enforces State regulations in regard to sewerage treatment, water supply and food handling.

The Department, which currently employs approximately 40 people, provides all services from its Courthouse location. Space in the Courthouse is inadequate and the problem is expected to become more acute because of the continual increases expected in the Health Department's staff. The Department Director has requested the County Commissioners to supply it with additional space in the Courthouse. It is likely that space formerly used by the Social Services Department will be made available to the County Health Department. Acquisition of the space will meet the Health Depart-

ment's needs for the foreseeable future. Cars are parked on the Courthouse and jail parking lots. These lots appear adequate for the present and for the foreseeable future.

## SOCIAL/HUMAN RESOURCES SERVICES

### Social/Employment Services

The County Social Services and Employment Security Offices are located at the periphery of the Town. The Social Services Office is located at the southeast quadrant of the intersection of Route 213 and Route 40. The Department has recently moved into a new building and will remain there for a lease period of at least five years. A portion of the Social Services Office which still remains in downtown Elkton will soon move out to Route 40 with the rest of the Department.

The Employment Security Office has recently moved from the center of Town to a point at the southeast quadrant of the intersection of Route 545 and Route 40. Employment Security is also staying in a rented building and will remain there for a period of at least five years. Both of these offices are adequately housed at this time and will probably be so for the foreseeable future. These agencies provide basic income maintenance, employment counseling and employment compensation services for those in need in Elkton and the surrounding County. Discussion with Department of Human Resources officials indicates that if the proposed multi-service center is constructed in Elkton, these two agencies could possibly move back into the center of Town when their five year term leases have terminated. If State-owned office space is not available, the Social Services and Employment Security offices will undoubtedly remain at their current locations on Route 40.

### Commission on Aging

The County Commission on Aging provides transportation, nutritional services, recreational activity, and other aid to elderly citizens. In Elkton, the Commission operates two centers where the elderly are taken for meals and for social/recreational activity.

### Veteran's Commission

This agency provides various health, counseling, and other services to veterans and their families.

### American National Red Cross\*

The Red Cross branch, located in the Cecil Center, provides disaster relief services, emergency assistance to military families, and training in such subjects as first aid, swimming and boating safety, and home nursing.

### Maryland Children's Aid and Family Services, Inc.\*

This organization provides adoption services for families desiring children and also attempts to place children in foster homes. Counseling and emergency relief for families in need is also provided.

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\* Denotes Private Agency



### Cecil County Activity Center, Inc.\*

The Center, located in Hollingsworth Manor, provides day care, speech training, and physical therapy for retarded people of age 16 and over.

### Cecil County Day Care Center for the Retarded\*

Located on North Street in Elkton, this day care center provides services similar to the ones shown above for children 3-15 years of age.

### RECREATION

Major local recreation facilities include school playground areas and an extensive park network which lies mainly along the Big Elk Creek south of Howard Street. Other recreational/cultural facilities available to Town residents include the County Library as well as a privately owned skating rink and bowling alley.

School facilities located throughout the Town have facilities for active sports, such as softball and basketball, and also have children's playground equipment.

In the older parts of Town north of the Big Elk Creek, these schools are located at widespread locations and these recreation facilities are generally accessible within walking or easy driving distances of nearby residential areas. An exception is at the west end of Main Street between that thoroughfare and Route 40. In this sector, there are no schools or other publicly owned land, and recreational/open space facilities are virtually nonexistent. In the newer development south of the Big Elk Creek many areas are undeveloped and open space abounds. However, the ball diamonds and playground equipment located at Meadow Park, Thomson Estates Elementary School, and Holly Hall Elementary School can generally only be reached by car, a characteristic resulting from the spread-out "suburban" nature of the new development in the area. Overall, however, recreation sites are reasonably well distributed throughout the Town and, with the exception of tennis courts and softball/baseball diamonds which are in short supply, are considered sufficient to meet present and future needs.

The municipal park system, comprising some 450 acres, is currently being developed to accommodate a wide range of active and passive recreational activities. When completely developed it will vastly increase recreation activities for Elkton residents as well as those in the surrounding County. The following sites (see Community Facilities map following page 32) comprise the major public parks in Elkton. Additional undeveloped parkland lies along the Big Elk Creek. Information on existing and proposed uses was obtained from the Town Recreation and Parks Director, as well as from a recently completed consultant study entitled "Comprehensive Recreation Plan: Town of Elkton, Cecil County, Maryland".

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\* Denotes Private Agency

TABLE 16

Major Park Facilities

<u>Name and Acreage</u>	<u>Present Condition/Use</u>	<u>Recommended/ Planned Use</u>	<u>Improvements Needed</u>
Eder Park 36 ± acres (privately owned)	Softball/baseball, open space.	Same	
Meadow Park 132 acres	Softball, football, soccer, tot lot, children's play- ground. Footbridge will soon be built linking the western portion of Meadow Park with Eder Park. Volleyball courts will be added within a few months.	Wide variety of active and passive recreational acti- vities, to include softball, football, volleyball, soccer, picnicking, hiking/ major trails, chil- dren's playground. Also being con- sidered is a muni- cipal swimming pool on a portion of this parkland.	Addition of diamond and fields; pavil- ion and children's equipment. Road will be completed through the park linking all activi- ties. Portion of Meadow Park on eastern side of Route 7 would have community swimming pool. Total cost of improvements -- \$613,200*.
Hatchery Park 100 acres (former State owned fish hatchery)	Mostly unused and rundown. Has large barn and ten fish storage ponds plus four smaller ponds.	Fishing, hiking, picnicking, active sports. Barn would be converted to in- door recreation facility. Camping would also be avail- able at this site.	Renovation of barn and construction of appropriate fields and diamonds. General clean up and repairs. Estimated cost \$102,900.**
Marina Park 32 ± acres	Boat docking facili- ties in poor repair. Facility is used very little. Tennis courts will soon be available.	Boating, camping, tennis.	Renovation of dock- ing facilities, clearing area for campers.
Hollingsworth Manor Park 5 ± acres	Tennis, Basketball, Softball, Children's Playground, picnic area.	Same	

NOTES: \* Does not include cost of footbridge across Big Elk Creek.

\*\* Does not include barn renovation.



The cost of all proposed improvements, most of which have been mentioned here, would be approximately one million dollars, not accounting for inflation. It should be noted, however, that \$470,000 or about half of this total, would be used for the swimming pool. Also, considerable cost savings could be achieved if Town employees could undertake some of the work, such as rough grading, earth fill and water/sewer line installation.

While the Town has not officially acted on all of these proposals, some of these recommendations are currently being implemented. First of all Meadow Park west of Delaware Avenue has been improved to some extent and work is currently progressing. New playground equipment was installed there in 1976, and a road around the perimeter of the park is moving toward completion. Also four to six lighted tennis courts will soon be constructed at Marina Park. These projects will aid in alleviating the current overcrowding on tennis courts and softball/baseball diamonds.

Another project of importance is the foot bridge planned across the Big Elk Creek linking Eder and Meadow Parks. This link will create a large complex offering a wide range of conveniently accessible recreational activities, all of which would be accessible to pedestrians. The Meadow Park/Eder Park complex is considered to be the key portion of the entire park system by virtue of its aforementioned diversified recreational activities and its location adjacent to the downtown area. Construction of this linking bridge will do much toward strengthening this recreation complex.

Completion of even a portion of the proposed improvements to the parks adjacent to the downtown area would give it a unique resource which would serve to draw people from the surrounding area as well as meeting the needs of the local population.

## SOLID WASTE COLLECTION AND DISPOSAL

### Garbage Collection

Garbage collection is provided by the municipal Department of Public Works to all areas lying within the Town limits. Collections are scheduled two days per week in the central area and two other days per week in the outlying areas. Service is not provided outside of Town.

Current personnel strength is three-four full-time individuals. Service is adequate at present and no increase in personnel or equipment is required in the foreseeable future.

### Disposal Sites

The Town disposes of refuse at two different locations. Dry bulk materials, such as leaves and grass, are taken to a municipally owned site on Oldfield Point Road just outside of Elkton. Sand and gravel are removed from this site as needed and is replaced by the refuse. The site is adequate at the present time and for the foreseeable future.

Garbage is taken to the Elk Neck Landfill, a County facility located further south on Oldfield Point Road. This site will be filled within two years and will be closed at that time. A central County landfill, located on Route 7 adjacent to Elk Neck State Park, will then be opened. This site, covering some 400 acres, will serve the entire County and will meet all projected needs for the next 50 years.

## MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT - CITY HALL

City Hall, an eighteenth century structure located at Main and North Streets, houses the Town Manager and his staff and also serves as the site of municipal government meetings. While parking is scarce, and staff must generally park on the street, office space is considered to be adequate at the present time.

The building will probably be expanded within the next year or two so that office space is increased by several hundred square feet. This will provide space for additional staff and for a Mayor's office. Parking, however, will continue to be a problem since no parking lots exist in the immediate area.



# TOWN OF ELKTON

## COMMUNITY FACILITIES











# SECTION E

## ELKTON TRANSPORTATION

### ELEMENT

#### GENERAL

Elkton's street and highway system is composed of a basic network of State maintained highways which function as the Town's main streets, with minor municipal streets connecting to them. Five Maryland highways enter Elkton connecting the Town to all parts of the region. Route 213, the main north-south street in Elkton, is the only thoroughfare connecting the northern and southern ends of the County. Routes 40 and I-95 connect the Town to all parts of the region as well as to the rest of the Nation as a whole.

There are approximately 28.2 miles of streets and highways in Elkton, of which some 7.8 miles are State or Federal highways, and 18.0 miles are municipal thoroughfares. The rest of the network is maintained by the County. In 1963, when the first comprehensive plan was prepared, the total street network comprised 18.5 miles of streets and highways. Most of the increase since then has resulted from large municipal annexations of existing road rights-of-way as well as construction of thoroughfares in several new subdivisions.

#### THE MAJOR STREET SYSTEM

The following briefly describes the major thoroughfares and their functions:

U.S. 40 - one of the two major in-County routes and the southern border of the I-95 - Route 40 transportation corridor. Almost all of the major State thoroughfares in Elkton intersect with Route 40 at some point.

Bridge Street (Route 213) - the major north and south street in Elkton itself as well as in the County as a whole.

North Street (Route 268) - an important commercial street, particularly to banking and attendant activities, the major direct entrance to the central area from the north.

Newark Avenue (Md. 279) - connects Elkton with I-95 and serves as a major northern bypass channelling through traffic between I-95 and Route 40. This road is primarily a regional thoroughfare and is not a significant conduit for local traffic.

Delaware Avenue and West Main Street (Md. Route 7) - the main entrance to the Town from the east via Route 40.

Main Street (Md. 281) - the principal commercial and residential street and a major east and west connector. It is also an important collector street carrying traffic east to Delaware.

High Street - the only 2-way east-west connector south of the Pennsylvania Railroad, along with Main Street it carries most of Elkton's cross-town traffic.

Blueball Road (Md. 545) - on the western edge of Town, this thoroughfare serves the industrial center in that vicinity by bringing in traffic from the north.

## CURRENT PROBLEMS AND CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

### Effect of Major Land Use Features and Transportation Arteries on the Town's Traffic Circulation

Elkton has excellent regional access by virtue of its location at the confluence of several major State highways. The center of Town is directly accessible by only a few streets. This is particularly true from the north where only Md. Routes 213 and 268 cross over the old Pennsylvania Railroad right-of-way. The Big and Little Elk Creeks also act as something of a barrier, as only five streets bridge these streams and connect Elkton to southern Cecil County. Because of this, all traffic entering the downtown area is forced to use these major rights-of-way.

Another significant factor in the Town's physical make-up is the fact that its major traffic generators are scattered throughout the Town and, because there is poor circulation in many areas outside of Elkton, travel between these focal points must always go through the Town itself. Thus heavy traffic that constantly passes between the industrial areas to the northwest, the commercial strip along Route 40, the central area itself, and the residential areas to the east and southeast, is all channeled along the same major thoroughfares. This excessive concentration of traffic creates major congestion problems at several key points.

### Traffic Problems and Solutions as Envisioned in the 1963 Elkton Master Plan

The 1963 Plan stressed road improvements which would increase the accessibility and attractiveness of the downtown area. The viability of this central business district was considered to be extremely important to the future well-being of the Town.

Among major proposals was the development of a one-way street system utilizing Howard and Main Streets. Also the Plan proposed the extension of Bow Street from Main to Howard and the extension of South Street from Main to High in order to create a loop around the main business district. This loop would detour through traffic and would also make the business district and its off-street parking facilities more accessible. Among additional improvements proposed were the widening of the bridges on North and Bridge Streets, widening other streets to accommodate through traffic, and the realignment of numerous intersections in the downtown area. Also recommended was a possible southern bypass from Howard to Main Street which was also intended to route through traffic around the business district.

Since 1963, some significant improvements have been made in the Elkton street system which have resulted in improved circulation in the downtown area. A one-way street system has been developed and, combined with the completion of the recommended traffic loop around the downtown area, has reduced traffic congestion significantly. Also, extension of Bow Street south to the parking areas on Howard Street, has made these parking lots more accessible and has served to reduce pressure from on-street parking. Also, additional improvements such as the widening of High Street and the improvements at several major intersections have served to make the downtown area more accessible and less congested.

The 1963 Plan was predicated upon the belief that major commercial growth would occur downtown and that traffic conditions had to be improved significantly so that future congestion in the downtown area would be avoided.



The Plan's recommendations were therefore aimed at improving downtown circulation. Although these recommendations were generally implemented, different development patterns than were anticipated have created new issues and problems.

In recent years the shifting of commercial activities south to Route 40 served to reduce additional traffic pressure on the downtown streets; although congestion still exists there. Current problems center on Bridge Street and Route 40 and the increasing concentration of traffic on these two thoroughfares.

### Specific Problems in Traffic Circulation

#### Congestion Along Bridge Street

As the major north-south road in the County, Bridge Street (Route 213) carries heavy through traffic through the center of Elkton. A substantial portion of this traffic originates in upper Cecil County and Pennsylvania and travels to resort areas on the Lower Eastern Shore. While this was once a seasonal phenomena, increasing use of year-round second homes on the Lower Shore makes this form of traffic a continuing occurrence.

In addition to regional factors, local considerations also contribute greatly to traffic on Bridge Street. Bridge Street is the only direct route between northern and western Elkton and Route 40. While other routes are possible, they are circuitous and would involve driving through numerous narrow residential streets. Bridge Street's congestion is aggravated by traffic back-ups on the narrow bridge over the Pennsylvania Railroad track and also by heavy auto traffic at the intersection of Bridge Street and Elkton Boulevard. Elkton Boulevard carries all traffic into the industrial complex along Blueball Road and, during peak hours, traffic backs up in both directions along Bridge Street from the Elkton Boulevard intersection. Finally, the increasing commercial development along Route 40 has placed an even greater demand on Bridge Street because this thoroughfare is the main road leading into the newly built Big Elk Mall and adjacent commercial operations.

As can be expected, heavy commercial development at the Route 40/Route 213 intersection has resulted in heavy auto congestion at this location. Daily traffic counts taken in the early 1970's indicated that, even then, this intersection was the most heavily used in the Elkton area. Traffic use here has increased even further since the construction of the Mall and other commercial development. Also, other data developed during the early 1970's indicated that this intersection had the highest accident rate of any in the Elkton area. This problem has also undoubtedly increased with the expanding volume of traffic. Besides the heavy traffic, the fact that most commercial developments along this segment of Route 40 have direct access onto that thoroughfare also contributes to the problem. The 1963 Plan specifically warned against granting access from numerous commercial developments directly onto Route 40. However, this warning unfortunately was not heeded.

#### Downtown Congestion

Congestion in the downtown area centers on High, North and Main Streets and results from overflow from the Courthouse parking lot, heavy east-west traffic, and traffic from local shoppers. On-street parking along both

sides of Main Street has also contributed to the congestion problems in the business district itself.

### State of Repair

While most of the State street network in the Town is covered with paving material of high quality, the municipal network in some instances is inadequately paved. Material used in paving municipal streets is often composed of a low grade bituminous base with a relatively short life span. Combined with the lack of curbing and gutters, another condition which exists throughout much of Elkton, this situation is generally responsible for poor drainage, rough streets, and potholes which are found even in the better residential areas of Town.

### PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Public transportation for Elkton's residents is provided primarily by intercity bus service and local cab firms. Bus service is available to points along Route 40 both north and south of the Town. Major cities such as Wilmington and Baltimore can be reached via intercity buses which stop in Elkton. Also, O'Neill's Bus Service provides a daily bus run to the Chrysler Automobile Plant in Newark for Elkton residents working there. Cab service is also available, and currently some thirteen cabs are operating in Elkton. While there is no intercity passenger service provided to Elkton, rail freight service is provided by Conrail when needed.

The only other public transportation in the Elkton area is provided free to specific client groups such as the elderly and the retarded. Agencies such as the Cecil County Commission on Aging, the County Social Services Department, and the Cecil County school for retarded children, provide transportation for these persons with special needs.



# SECTION F

## LAND USE

### CONSIDERATIONS

TOWN DEVELOPMENT - PLAN AND REALITY: 1962-1976

#### General

When the 1963 Plan was completed, Elkton and its environs was the most populous area in the County, with its population increase of 44.6% since 1950 being second only to that of the Port Deposit Election District. The Town's population, growing from 5,245 to 5,989, registered by far the greatest numerical increase of any municipality in Cecil County.

Prospects for continued rapid population growth were considered to be good. As the major population center in a rapidly growing county where population was expected to increase by half (50,000 to 75,000) by 1980, Elkton was expected to receive a substantial proportion of this increase. In addition, the Town's position in the rapidly growing Route 40/I-95 corridor and its location in the path of urbanization emanating from both the Baltimore and Wilmington metropolitan areas were also expected to enhance its growth potential. The Plan, in fact, estimated that Elkton's population would reach 10,000 by 1980.

#### Development Patterns Envisioned in the 1963 Elkton Master Plan

The Plan stated that the growth of the Town would be in a north/northeasterly direction toward I-95. The Md. Route 279/I-95 Interchange, in particular, was expected to be a major focal point generating substantial industrial and commercial development along Route 279 from the expressway toward Elkton itself. It was expected that the additional 4,000+ people in Elkton by 1980 would settle mostly on the northern and eastern edges of Town in an area bordered by Maryland Route 545 on the west and extending past Route 40 on the southeast. In addition to this increase, significant population depending on Elkton for employment, shopping, schools and other services, was expected to concentrate in large residential subdivisions nearby. The Plan also predicted that the Town would eventually annex many of the adjoining developed and developing areas. Heavy industrial development was slated for the northwestern portion of Elkton north of the Pennsylvania Railroad and west of Bridge Street.

The open area extending south from the Big Elk Creek toward Route 40 and beyond was considered to be largely unsuitable for future development because of environmental problems and because the commercialized strip along Route 40, with its unsightly environment and heavy traffic, was considered to be a barrier to residential development in the area.

Both the County and Town zoning ordinances recognized and supported this belief that growth would be to the north. The 1963 Elkton Zoning Ordinance in its "Elkton's Zoning Boundaries" map covering land in Elkton and its immediate vicinity, zoned Route 279 for light manufacturing and highway commercial use from the Town boundary to I-95. Large areas north of the Town were zoned at medium density with a portion between Bridge Street and



Maryland Route 545 reserved for high density development. Medium and high density zones also bordered the Town to the east. Recognizing environmental constraints existing to the south, the Ordinance designated most of this area as floodway, agricultural-residential and waterfront recreation zones, with the exception of commercial zoning granted along Route 40. The County Zoning Ordinance enacted during the same period, classified land uses in the Elkton area in much the same manner.

This policy of growth to the north was also espoused in a study done for Elkton by the Municipal Technical Advisory Service of the University of Maryland. In its report "Annexation Considerations for the Town of Elkton", published in 1963, the Service recommended that large open tracts to the north extending to Ricketts Mill Road and other tracts to the east along Route 279, should be annexed by the Town because the preponderance of future growth was expected to occur in these areas. These large parcels of open land could then be developed with a mix of land uses carefully planned by the Town, and thus avoid the negative impact of incremental sprawl development.

The center of Town was not expected to accommodate significant additional residential development because of the lack of developable land there. Most open parcels in the downtown area were either landlocked or were too small and scattered to be of use. Development in the center of Town was to be limited mostly to business and parking lot expansion.

Some growth was expected to emanate from Elkton along Route 40 toward the northeast. This recognized the fact that the Route 40 corridor was considered to be the fastest growing portion of the County.

In short, while some growth was expected to push in several directions from the center of Town, the predominant thrust was to be in a north/northeasterly direction toward I-95. This anticipated growth, however, depended upon availability of water/sewer infrastructure. The 1963 Elkton Plan recommended that the municipal water and sewerage systems be extended to serve these areas.

#### Development of the Town and its Environs 1962-1976

Contrary to the predictions and recommendations of the 1963 planning documents, Elkton has not grown to the north. With the exception of expanded industrial activity between Route 213 and Blue Ball Road, most growth in the north has been restricted to residential infill in the Gilpin/Newark Avenue areas and scattered commercial development at the intersection of Route 279 and 213.

The Town's physical expansion as well as its residential and commercial development has, contrary to existing plans and recommendations, moved south toward Route 40. First of all, a review of recent annexation shows that since 1968, the Town has annexed 2,724 acres of which 2,026 lies south of the Big Elk Creek and another 606 lie east of the Creek between Route 279 and Main Street.

Secondly, all large new residential subdivisions in Town - Thomsen Estates, Trinity Village, Buckhill Farms, Elk Landing - have been built south of the Big Elk Creek. In addition, development pressure is also being exerted in the area by other newer residential subdivisions - Holly Hall and Normira -

which lie immediately adjacent to the southern municipal boundaries.

Finally, extensive commercial activity culminating in the opening of the Big Elk Mall in 1976, has occurred to the south along Route 213 and particularly at its intersection with Route 40. As a result, the commercial life of Elkton has increasingly shifted to Route 40 and away from the original Town center.

There are several possible reasons for this concentration of new development below the Big Elk Creek and away from the northern reaches.

1. Development along Maryland 279 and at the Route 279/I-95 Interchange was Precluded by State Highway Administration Policies.

Maryland Route 279 from the Town boundary east to the I-95 interchange is a limited access road which has long been scheduled for widening to four lanes. Because of this scheduled widening, the State Highway Administration has, for many years, controlled a 150 foot right-of-way along the road, as well as numerous parcels along the road frontage. Direct access to Route 279 has been effectively denied in many instances and, as a result, industrial and roadside commercial development originally planned for this open area has never occurred. Also, for the same reason, i.e., lack of access to Route 279, residential development has been severely curtailed between the Town boundary and the I-95 interchange.

This loss of a large portion of Route 279 and the I-95 interchange as a focal point for urbanization has diminished the northern area's attractiveness to potential development. Market pressures have thus shifted to the south.

2. The Area South Toward Route 40, While Suffering from Natural Constraints, also Possessed Distinct Advantages for Development.

With development hindered in the north, the area south of Town became a target for growth. First of all, Route 40 was becoming increasingly a localized commercial corridor with the removal of regional traffic to I-95. Commercial activity other than the roadside auto-oriented establishments traditionally found on Route 40, could now prosper. This trend, combined with the availability of ample commercially zoned land in the area made Route 40 an extremely desirable commercial location.

Secondly, the large parcels of open land to the south were also attractive to residential developers. Sewage service was readily available from the nearby Holly Hall utility system at a time when the existing municipal sewerage treatment plant, which would have had to service development to the north, was fast becoming taxed to capacity.

These southern reaches were also attractive to home owners because of the easy accessibility of both the downtown area and the commercial development along Route 40 as well as the availability of nearby parkland and other recreational activities along the Big Elk Creek and the Elk River.



These advantages, combined with the restrictions existing in the north, caused growth pressure to move to the south. New residential development once begun in the late 1960's quickly gathered momentum in the early 1970's as pressures to develop this area increased. The sewer moratorium in New Castle County, initiated during the early 1970's, served to further increase growth pressures in the Elkton area as substantial residential growth spilled over into Cecil County.

As a result of these pressures, the Town has annexed and grown in the direction dictated by prevailing economic trends and not in accordance with the policies of the 1963 Master Plan. The result of this has been, in effect, the creation of miniature suburbs to the south of the "Old Town" and the drawing away of new residential development and commercial activities from the older developed area of Elkton.

## TOWN DEVELOPMENT - THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE

### General

This section first examines the existing mix of land uses in Elkton. In addition, current growth trends are discussed and the impacts of proposed new residential development are analyzed. Finally, Elkton's future development potential is assessed by first examining the extent and location of available vacant land and also the potential effects of public policies (i.e., the County Comprehensive Plan) on future development in the Town.

The purpose is to illustrate the potential location and scale of future development as well as to identify the obstacles which may impede growth.

### The 1962 and 1976 Land Use Surveys

A comparison of land uses in 1962 and 1976 is useful in that changes and trends can be identified. Despite differences in land areas, and classification systems, some general comparisons are in order:

First, the 1962 survey:

TABLE 17

#### Elkton Land Use - 1962

<u>Land Use</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Percent Developed Land</u>	<u>Percent Total Town Area</u>
Residential	233	45.2	20.2
Commercial	54	10.5	4.7
Industrial	20	3.9	1.8
Recreational	57	11.0	5.0
Institutional-Public	17	3.3	1.5
Roads - Highways	<u>135</u>	<u>26.2</u>	<u>11.7</u>
Total Developed	516	100.0	44.9
Total Undeveloped		638 (55.1%)	
Total Town Area		1,154	

The source for Table 17 was: "Analysis of Existing Land Use and Development Potential"(Blair and Stein Associates, 1962).

In 1962, there were 1,154 acres of land within the Town of which 44.9% were developed and 55.1% were undeveloped. Virtually all development lay north and west of the Big Elk Creek. Nearly half (45.2%) of all developed land was in residential use, the overwhelming majority of this being used for single-family homes.

The commercial life of Elkton was centered at the intersection of North Street and Main Street with most of the commercial structures in Town as well as a majority of public buildings, such as the Town Hall and the Court-house, fronting on these thoroughfares. Some industrial development had begun in the northwest portion of Elkton.

The high percentage of developed area covered by roads (26.2%) resulted from the Town's location at the confluence of numerous major State highways.

Large expanses of open land lay both north and south of the Town's boundaries. The northern reaches of Town included some strips of residential development along Route 213 (then Route 280), Blue Ball Road and Route 711. South of the Big Elk Creek, the only significant development lay within and to the east of the wedge between Route 40 and Route 7 where residential and commercial development was concentrated.

Current land uses as surveyed during 1976 (see map), are shown as follows:

TABLE 18

<u>Elkton Land Use - 1976</u>			
<u>Land Use</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Percent Developed Land</u>	<u>Percent Total Town Acres</u>
Residential	297	23.6	7.6
Commercial	172	13.7	4.4
Industrial	99	7.9	2.6
Recreational	316	25.1	8.1
Institutional-Public	125	9.9	3.2
Roads - Highways	<u>248</u>	<u>19.7</u>	<u>6.4</u>
Total Developed Areas	1,257	100.0	32.3
Total Undeveloped	2,623 (67.7%)		
Total Town Acreage	3,884		

The most obvious change is that the Town's area has increased by more than 300% since the 1962 land use survey was taken as a result of the massive annexation of open land adjacent to the old Town boundaries. Now more than two-thirds of the land currently within the municipal boundaries is undeveloped.

Other major changes in land use since the early 1960's include:

- 1) a decline in the percentage of residential land, mainly because of the heavy increase in other uses and because residential development itself has not increased rapidly;



- 2) a decline in the percentage of land utilized for roads due to the extensive annexation of open lands;
- 3) a large increase of approximately 260 acres in the amount of land devoted to recreational use as a result of the Town's acquisition of substantial parkland along the Big Elk Creek;
- 4) a five-fold increase in the amount of land devoted to industrial use due to substantial influx of manufacturing firms along Blue Ball Road and the west side of Route 213;
- 5) the large increase in the percentage of institutional land. This is deceptive, however, because most of the increase has occurred as a result of municipal annexations of the Elkton Middle School and Elkton High School properties, and not because of a natural increase in public land use within the Town.

#### Elkton - Current Land Use Patterns

The spatial distribution of land uses within the older developed areas of Elkton remains essentially the same as in the early 1960's. The downtown area still centers on Main and North Streets with most commercial outlets fronting on these two thoroughfares. In the central area of Town, bounded by Bridge Street, North Street, Railroad Avenue and Main Street, most of the Town's public and professional activities continue to exist. Here lies the greatest variety of land use.

Surrounding the downtown core are the clearly defined residential neighborhoods of East Main Street, Friendship Heights, East High Street, and Elkton Heights. To the west lies Little Elk and Hollingsworth Manor. With the exception of the mixed commercial/residential land uses prevalent in the vicinity of Little Elk, the other residential neighborhoods continue to remain almost completely residential in character and have not been invaded by commercial or industrial activity. In all of these neighborhood areas, single family residences are predominant.

To the northwest, industrial activities are centered on Blue Ball Road and the west side of Bridge Street in the vicinity of Elkton Boulevard. Commercial activity has also increased at the Route 279-Route 213 intersection.

The land south and east of the Big Elk Creek is largely vacant at this time and new residential development has been confined to land adjacent to Hollingsworth Manor and the Thomsen Estates. In fact, almost 80% of the vacant land in Elkton lies in the southern and eastern reaches.

#### Current Development Trends and Impacts

At the present time, development pressures are occurring at several points in the immediate vicinity of Elkton. To the northeast the land along Route 279 between the I-95 interchange and the Delaware line is considered to be a magnet for future development. East of the I-95 interchange, Route 279 is not a limited access road and new commercial development has recently located at the interchange itself. Residential growth is also anticipated in this area. Because this development cannot, at the present time, extend west of the interchange, it may not have an immediate effect on Elkton.

# TOWN OF ELKTON

## EXISTING LAND USE







# DOWNTOWN ELKTON

## EXISTING LAND USE



300 150 0 150 300

SCALE IN FEET



RESIDENTIAL



COMMERCIAL



INDUSTRIAL



PUBLIC



UNDEVELOPED





Another possible development area lies to the southwest along Oldfield Point Road and in the Elk Neck area where some residential development activity has begun. While this activity is not extensive at present, the development could increase and move close to Elkton. It then could have effects within the boundaries of the Town.

A third area of potential development pressure lies at the intersection of Route 279 and Route 213. Here, commercial development has occurred in recent years and large open parcels remain along Routes 213 and 279, both within and adjacent to the Town, for additional commercial, industrial, and residential use. A major concentration of open land lies at the north-west quadrant of Route 279 and Route 213. This site, the location of the Old Triumph Munitions Plant, could support substantial residential or commercial development. Another large parcel, currently zoned commercial, lies within the Town limits along Route 213. The County Planning Office believes that this intersection and the land around it could become heavily developed in the future.

Within the Town boundaries themselves virtually all development pressure is occurring south of the Big Elk Creek toward Route 40. All proposed residential subdivisions for which preliminary plans or final plats have been approved lie in this southern area.

While many of these developments, because of economic uncertainty and lack of utilities, may eventually be either scaled down or abandoned altogether, it might be useful to discuss briefly the extent of this proposed development and to assess some potential impacts on local services. (See Table 19)

If this development actually occurs, a total of 2,623 new dwelling units, 1,843 of which would be single-family dwellings, will be constructed. If these units are built, the following potential impacts can be expected:

#### Population

The population of the Town, based on the housing mix proposed in these planned developments would more than double. The 1,843 single-family units and the 780 garden apartments proposed in the existing plans would increase Elkton's population by 7,700 to 8,800 depending on whether a high or low household size estimate is used.\* The Town's population would thus total between 14,600 and 15,200 when these units are constructed and occupied.

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\* All figures assume that 1.5% of these new dwelling units would be vacant (as per the estimated 1977 vacancy rate). The low estimate was obtained by using the 1975-1976 New Castle County statistics obtained from WILMAPCO which shows that each single-family unit in the County has 3.3 persons per household and that each multi-family unit has an average of 2.2 persons per household. The high estimate was obtained by multiplying the total additional dwelling units (minus a 1.5% vacancy factor) times 3.40 persons per household, the figure for Cecil County as obtained from the Sales Management 1976 issue of Buying Power.

TABLE 19

Planned Residential Development in Elkton

<u>Development</u>	<u>Acreeage</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Status</u>
<u>Buckhill Farms</u>				
Section 1	50	North of Courtenay Drive, west of Delancy Road	98 single-family detached	Preliminary Plans Approved
Section 3	60	South of Courtenay Drive west of Delancy Road	101 single-family detached	Under Construction
<u>Delancy Village</u>				
Section 3	10.4	West of Delancy Road, north of Route 40, south of Courtenay Drive	83 townhouses	Plat Approved
<u>Heritage Woods</u> (Monumental Properties)				
Tract 1	94.6	West of Route 213, South of Route 40	338 single-family attached	Preliminary Plans Approved
2	13.0	East of Route 213, South of Route 40	350 single-family detached	
3	127.0	East of White Hall Road, South of Route 40	476 townhouses 564 garden apts.	
4 5	27.6 18.6	White Hall Road north of Route 40	Combined total for two tracts is 108 single- family dwellings	Plat recorded, construction starts summer of 1977

TABLE 19  
(CONTINUED)

<u>Development</u>	<u>Acreage</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Status</u>
<u>Snug Harbour</u>	73.5	Little Elk Creek by Oldfield Point Road	183 single-family 216 garden apart- ments	Preliminary Plans Approved
<u>Thomsen Estates</u>				
Section 6A	114	On West Village Road north of West Thomsen Avenue	41 single-family detached	Plat recorded- no immediate plans for construction
<u>Trinity Village</u>				
Section III C	10	Near West Village Road north of West Thomsen Avenue	22 single-family detached	Under Construction
Village Knoll Extension	3.8	East of West Village Road, west of Delancy Road	43 townhouses	Plat recorded - no immediate plans for construction
Totals	520.5		<hr/> 2,623	



## Pupil Yield

The population increase of the range indication will result in formation of 2,584 additional households (based on the 98.5% of the proposed dwelling units which would be occupied). This increase in households, based on the mix of single-family, townhouse, and garden apartment units envisioned, would yield a total of 1,595 public school pupils. Total enrollment in schools now serving Elkton would be 6,189 or 22% over their current capacity of 5,093. This additional demand would have to be met by restructuring school districts or by expanding existing public school facilities in and around Elkton.\*

## Water and Sewerage Facilities

The anticipated population growth would increase water demand by between .77 and .88 mgd depending on whether a high or low population estimate is used. These figures are based on an average consumption rate of 100 gpd. The Municipal Plant, with an average production of .80 mgd and a capacity of 1.5 mgd, would thus have to accommodate an average flow of between 1.57 and 1.68 mgd. It would have to increase the capacity by as much as .18 mgd simply to meet the average daily demand. To meet demand presented at peak flow, the municipal water filtration plant would have to increase its capacity to 2.38 mgd, or half again its current capacity.

At the standard national rate of 100 gpd in terms of individual sewage production, the population increase would place an additional demand of from .77 to .88 mgd on the Town's two sewage treatment plants. Total average daily demand would vary from 1.64 mgd (.77 in additional demand plus .87 mgd in current demand) to 1.75 mgd, thus taxing almost completely these plants' current capacity of 1.75 mgd. Since peak flows would be much higher, these plants, in order to meet this demand, would have to increase their capacity by as much as .59 mgd over current levels.

These increases in water/sewerage plant capacity do not take into account the demands placed on existing water/sewerage treatment plants by expansion of industrial/commercial activities or the addition of new residential development on land which is not currently platted. Since these would undoubtedly expand if Elkton continues to be a growth center, and additional heavy demand can be expected from these sources also.

While the impacts discussed herein are merely estimates, these should be carefully considered by local officials in considering future development requests and ultimately in formulating an overall growth policy for the Town.

## DETERMINANTS OF FUTURE GROWTH

Some of the determinants of the future growth of Elkton, such as current development and economic trends, have already been discussed and analyzed. The growth influencing factors remaining to be discussed in detail are the pertinent natural conditions affecting development and the potential effects of land policies and guidelines as outlined in the County Comprehensive Plan, Water and Sewer Plan, and other planning documents.

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\* Pupil per household figures used in this analysis were obtained from the New Castle County Department of Planning and Zoning and pertain to the Newark School District.

## The Physical Aspects

The basic physical determinants of the future direction and scale of growth in Elkton are the amount of developable land, and its relation to transportation arteries and community facilities.

The extensive open acreage to the south is reasonably well served by roads such as Route 40, Bridge Street, White Hall Road, Route 7, Delancy Road and Muddy Lane. The problem exists in that most of these roads run in roughly the same direction and that cross-country circulation between these arteries is practically non-existent unless one travels across Route 40 or through Town. This situation would probably improve if development occurred and spurred additional public/private road construction. All portions of Elkton are reasonably well situated in terms of accessibility to community facilities. The schools, Courthouse, and other community facilities are all within a ten to fifteen minute drive of any point within the Town.

As previously stated, the Town, through numerous annexations, has extensive open land within its boundaries. Some of this land, however, suffers natural constraints sufficient to seriously hinder urban development or preclude it altogether. The following discussion indicates, by sector (see map), where developable land exists and where flooding, soil or slope factors impede development.

TABLE 20

### Vacant Land Analysis

Use	Developable	Constrained	
Zoned Residential		By Soils	By Slope
Old Town	210	141	0
East	174	91	140
Southeast	145	5	131
South	588	210	17
Southwest	95	0	0
	<u>1,212</u>	<u>447</u>	<u>288</u>

Total Developable - 1,212

Total Constrained - 735

Total Vacant: 1,947 Acres

TABLE 20  
(CONTINUED)

Use	Developable	Constrained	
Zoned Commercial		By Soils	By Slope
Old Town	70	0	0
East	24	9	0
Southeast	43	0	0
South	23	0	0
Southwest	0	0	0
	<u>160</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>0</u>

Total Developable - 160

Total Constrained - 9

Total Vacant: 169 Acres

Zoned Industrial		By Soils	By Slope
Old Town	65	52	4
East	63	6	0
Southeast	0	0	0
South	0	0	0
Southwest	0	0	0
	<u>128</u>	<u>58</u>	<u>4</u>

Total Developable - 128

Total Constrained - 62

Total Vacant: 190 Acres

TOTAL VACANT: 2,623 Acres

Constrained:

Water/Floodplain	317
Soils	514
Slope	<u>292</u>

Total Constrained 1,123 Acres

Total Unconstrained 1,500 Acres



This survey identifies the large amount of open developable land existing within the Town boundaries. As can be seen, most of it lies in the area south and east of the Big Elk Creek. The developable acreage within the "Old Town" north of Elk Creek, with the exception of a large open parcel west of Hollingsworth Manor, consists mostly of isolated parcels scattered throughout the downtown area. The parcels, by virtue of their small size, are unsuitable for large scale development.

The major natural constraints to development are, in order of significance:

#### The Elk River, Elk Creek, and Adjacent Floodplain Areas

The Big and Little Elk Creeks, which bound the older areas of Elkton on three sides, meet south of Oldfield Point Road and flow to the Elk River. Extensive floodplain area begins along East Main Street and continues in a widening band south of Howard Street along Big Elk Creek until it covers an area of several hundred acres at the head of the Elk River south of Landing Lane. It is here that the major impact of this water system is most heavily felt, since several hundred acres in the area are severely constrained in terms of urban development. Overall, the floodplain and water barriers alone cover over 300 acres of open land. Additional acreage is constrained by soil impediments associated with the Creek and the Elk River.

The major use for this flood prone land along the Big Elk and Little Elk Creeks is for recreation areas. Most of the 316 acres devoted to park use in Elkton lie here.

#### Soil Impediments

Natural drainage in the Elkton area is generally good with fast flowing streams predominating in the north and sluggish ones lying in the south where the Piedmont Plateau levels out into the Coastal Plain. In the southern area another constraining factor exists in that some soils will not support development. Some 540 acres lying to the west, south, and east of the Old Town area are affected. Much of the soil here, because of high water tables, poor drainage, and tendency to flood, presents extremely serious constraints to any type of urban development. As indicated earlier, these soils may sometimes be used for recreation and also can, in some instances, be used for agriculture or left vacant as woodland or wildlife areas. Wetlands and tidal marshes lie mostly to the west and south of Oldfield Point Road.

Other areas in the south and southwest, while suitable for urban development, are moderately constrained by poor drainage, high water tables and poor engineering characteristics which limit use of septic tanks and also create cracking in pavements and roads. Municipal sewerage must be extended to serve these areas if heavy residential and commercial development is to occur there.

#### Slope Impediments

Elkton is situated at the merging of the Piedmont Plateau and the Coastal Plain. Slopes in the Elkton area are generally of three percent or less and present little difficulty to potential developers. The only areas where slope may impede development lie to the east of Farr Creek and along White-



hall Road. Here, slopes of 10 to 20% in places may inhibit urban development. A total of 292 acres of vacant land are affected by slopes of ten percent or greater. Some of this land, particularly those areas of 15% or greater slope, is unsuitable for intensive development.

Overall, approximately 1,120 acres of vacant land are beset by flooding, soil or slope problems sufficient to severely limit their use for extensive development. Also, additional vacant land will be added to the park system. Of the remaining vacant land acreage in which no severe natural constraints exist, 1,212 acres are zoned for residential use. Of this total, only 520 acres are currently planned for development (see earlier discussion). When one considers that even this planned development would add as many as 8,600 people to the Town's population, plus the fact that roughly 700 additional acres would be available for further residential use, it becomes obvious that the physical potential of the land to accommodate population growth is enormous.

Substantial development of land also is available for industrial expansion. While 62 of the available 190 acres of industrially zoned land are constrained by soil or slope impediment, these portions might possibly be used as storage areas or parking lots, thus leaving 128 additional acres of prime land for plants and related facilities.

In summary, physical constraints preclude from development a large percentage of Elkton's open acreage. However, sufficient land area in large parcels with adequate road access still exists to accommodate a great deal of additional growth should the Town allow it to occur. Local officials should, however, examine and assess the impacts of proposed development, as has been done here, in order to determine the scale of development which they wish the Town to absorb.

### Policy Considerations

Analysis of physical aspects reveals that the Town can accommodate extensive growth. Another major determinant for future growth in Elkton is the effect of the various existing Town and County growth oriented plans and policies.

#### Cecil County Comprehensive Plan

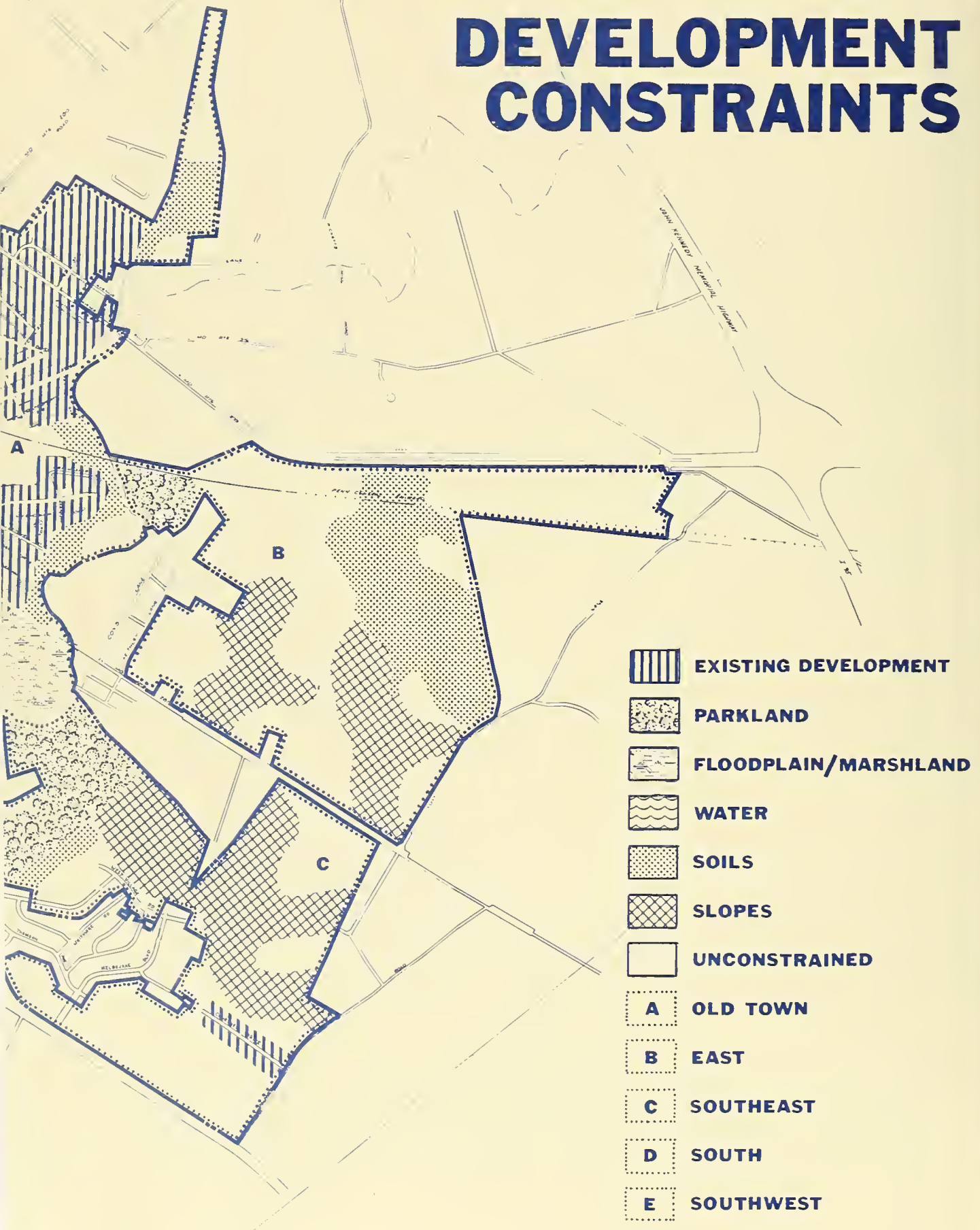
The first of these major plans is the Comprehensive Plan for Cecil County, Maryland, enacted in 1974. This Plan, which is currently undergoing revision and update, envisioned the Elkton area, which encompasses approximately 20,000 acres in the northeast portion of Cecil County, as a center of development pressure. This development would include commercial activities of a regional scale as well as industrial and office park construction. Major public facilities of a regional nature would include the hospital, library, civil defense agency, newspapers and major public buildings. The Town itself would be the focal point for all these activities.

Population would increase in this area from an estimated total of 12,980 in 1974 to 23,300 by 1990, thus giving the Elkton region the largest population of any planning area in the County. The updated version of the County Plan, now in draft form, reaffirms these population growth estimates and continues to identify the Elkton area as the major center of growth.

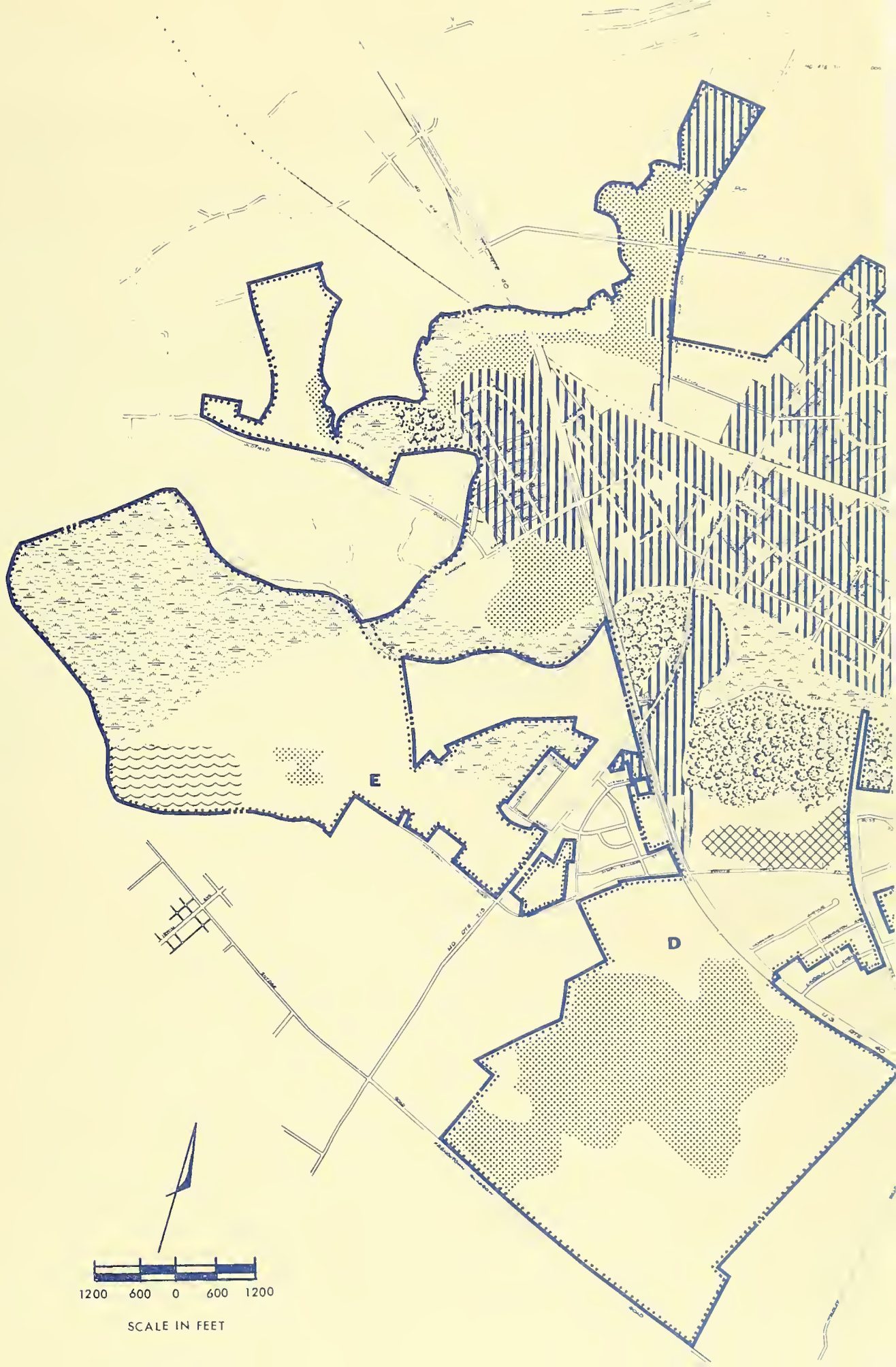


# TOWN OF ELKTON

## DEVELOPMENT CONSTRAINTS







1200 600 0 600 1200

SCALE IN FEET





## The County Water and Sewerage Plan

The major implementation mechanism for directing and staging growth as envisioned in the Comprehensive Plan is the County Water and Sewerage Plan. This document is particularly important in the Elkton area where soil conditions prohibit widespread use of septic systems.

The latest Plan, published in 1975, indicates that the area along Route 40 should receive first priority for sewerage and water service. This, of course, is in keeping with the existing development trends.

It appears, however, that the new Elkton Facilities Plan, based on the recommendations of the 1976 Elk Creek Basin Water Quality Management Plan, recommends that priority for additional service should swing to the north, thus reaffirming the direction advocated in the old Plan. The northern expanses between the Town and I-95 have ample open developable land and are less constricted by flooding and soil impediments than are the areas to the south.

In any event, the Town should find ample open land in any direction in which it desires to grow.

This land use element of the Elkton background studies has been an attempt to explain existing conditions and problems in land use and to determine their effect on the future growth of the Town. Major questions and policy options have been raised in this section as well as preceding segments of the background studies. These questions must be addressed in the updated Elkton Comprehensive Plan. Part II outlines some of these questions which will have to be addressed in the Plan and those which must be considered by the Town in attempting to formulate a growth policy for the future.



# PART II

## THE FUTURE DIRECTION OF PLANNING IN ELKTON





# SECTION A

## RECOMMENDATIONS OF

### 1963 MASTER PLAN

The following charts summarize major recommendations made in the 1963 Plan and subsequent actions on the part of the Town to implement these recommendations. The major goal of the Plan was to enhance the attractiveness of the Town's center as the focal point of the County's commercial activities. Major actions to be taken in support of this goal were extensive improvements to the downtown street system, creation of additional parking facilities, and the clearing of dilapidated structures to make room for street extensions, parking, and commercial expansion. Other major goals were the upgrading and preservation of housing quality in various neighborhoods and the expansion of the existing water/sewerage infrastructure to serve undeveloped areas, particularly to the north of Town where growth was expected to occur.

These various Plan recommendations are listed and rated according to the degree of completion or accomplishment. A 4-point scale is used:

- 4 - Fully completed or accomplished.
- 3 - Completed or accomplished for the most part.
- 2 - Partially completed or accomplished.
- 1 - Little or no progress toward completion.

TABLE 21

#### Implementation of the 1963 Elkton Master Plan

Project	Completion Rating	Remarks
Proposals for Elkton:		
<u>Central Business District</u>		
High Street area - eliminate substandard housing behind Courthouse across to High Street; enlarge Courthouse parking lot, widen High Street, expand business frontage along High, particularly at intersection of High and North Streets.	3	Several structures were demolished although several old ones remain behind Courthouse parking lot. Courthouse parking lot not enlarged. Some clearance occurred at High/North Street intersection. High Street has been widened as recommended.
Bow Street area - Bow street to be widened and extended to Howard Street. Substandard structures to be removed on east side of Bow	4	By 1969 Bow Street has been extended, and dilapidated structures had been removed.

TABLE 21  
(CONTINUED)

Project	Completion Rating	Remarks
for this extension as well as for expansion of parking and retail activity.		
Expand lots along Howard Street.	3	A new lot has been added behind the Texaco station on west side of Bow Street. This lot is not totally utilized because of distance from major stores on Main Street.
Remove or reduce curb parking on Main and North Streets.	1	Not Done.
Completion of loop system around business district and implementation of one-way system.	4	The one-way system was introduced in 1970 and was completed by 1973-1974.
Widen sidewalks along Main Street.	1	Not Done.
Business expansion along Main Street.	1	Not Done - some businesses have moved away since 1963 Plan was done.
Business expansion along High and North Streets - clearing of old structures for in-Town shopping center.	2	Done to some extent - Bank and U.S. Soil Conservation Service are now located there, and nearby parking facilities have also been expanded.
High Street - widen right-of-way.	3	Street was widened to some extent and work is continuing.



TABLE 21  
(CONTINUED)

Project	Completion Rating	Remarks
<u>Street Improvements</u>		
Route 40 - limit access by commercial establishments, provide service roads.	1	Commercial activity with direct access has proliferated, no service roads have been provided.
*Bridge Street - widen street and bridge, improving turning lanes at Main, High and Railroad Avenues. Commercial access to street should be controlled.	1	The only improvement made was the widening of the intersection at High Street. New commercial establishments north of Railroad Avenue have direct access onto Bridge Street.
*North Street - widen both street and bridge.	1	Not Done.
*Maryland 279 Newark Road - extent to Route 40.	4	Done.
*Eastern by-pass - new road will link Maryland 545, 280, 279, U.S. 40 as radial connector and by-pass route.	1	Not Done.
*Maryland 545 - Blue Ball Road - widen to better handle traffic from north to industrial area.	1	Not Done.
<u>Other Projects</u>		
Expansion of capacity of water filtration and sewage treatment plant needed to serve increasing population. Extension of pipelines to serve growth expected on northern edge of Town.	1	Not Done. In 1974 Holly Hall facility purchased by Town and supports portion of population in southern portion of Town, thereby eliminating need for immediate expansion of old Municipal Plant. No need to expand pipeline to north because growth has not occurred there.

\* State Roads - Completion of projects would be State responsibility.

TABLE 21  
(CONTINUED)

Project	Completion Rating	Remarks
Howard Street - extend east to join Main Street west of bridge over Big Elk, thus creating a southern by-pass around business district.	1	Not Done.
<u>Parks and Open Space</u>		
Expansion of existing park along Big Elk and Little Elk Creeks.	4	Since preparation of plan, Meadow Park and old State Fish Hatchery, both along Route 7, have been purchased by the Town. Recommendations for improving recreational facilities on these sites have recently been prepared.
<u>Parking</u>		
Construct public lot north of High Street.	4	Parking lot finished in early 1970's. Was financed jointly by County and Town.
Joint Town-hospital parking lot should be built on Bow Street.	3	While the Town did not participate in the project, the hospital and North Street commercial establishments have expanded parking along Bow Street.
Housing-Neighborhood Improvement	Degree of Completion	Remarks
Back Street - clear numerous substandard structures and re-house residents nearby. Also extend South Street through to High.	3	Some 23 structures removed before South Street was extended. Residents displaced were given first consideration in Windsor Village public housing and Elderly housing project on Main Street. Dilapidated structures in

TABLE 21  
(CONTINUED)

Housing-Neighborhood Improvement	Degree of Completion	Remarks
		area continue to be demolished as they are vacated.
Little Elk - clear, through spot removal, substandard housing and prevent further commercial encroachment.	2	Some spot clearance of substandard housing although commercial development continued growing in area and additional traffic is building up along Routes 213 and 40.

As can be seen in the charts, many of the improvements recommended for the downtown area were made. The main ones were the creation of increased parking and the implementation of the one-way and traffic loop system. All of these improvements were completed by the early 1970's. Because of the decline of commercial activity in the central business district, however, these projects could not help this area as much as had been originally anticipated. Particularly as a result of this decline, many projects intended to clear structures in order to create more space for business expansion, as well as other recommendations for face-lifting and environmental improvements in the downtown area, were never implemented.

Aside from the downtown area improvements, most of the Plan's recommendations were not implemented. The major street and bridge widening, the construction of an eastern by-pass, and the major expansion of the Town's utility system as advocated in the 1963 Plan, were not implemented.

The question now arises concerning the emphasis which the new Plan should take and the problems which it should address.



# SECTION B

## MAJOR ISSUES TO ADDRESS

The following discussion outlines things which the new Plan should consider.

### Overall Growth of the Town of Elkton

The first question that should be answered is whether the Town should be the major population center of the County, as articulated in the 1974 County Plan, or whether a limited growth policy should be pursued. Should the Town expand further in terms of area and, if so, how much and in what direction? Should the Town undertake the large expenditures to expand utility and road infrastructure in order to serve extensive areas presently within its boundaries? What should be done with the large open tracts of land recently annexed? Finally, what can be done to control the strip commercial development on Route 40 and its resulting auto congestion?

### Provision of Public Facilities

Depending in large measure on the decisions made concerning the overall growth of the Town, local policy makers also face choices on the upgrading of Elkton's utilities and street network. If substantial population growth is to occur, the sewerage/water treatment and filtration plants must be expanded and upgraded and substantial water/sewer lines must be constructed.

In addition, whether or not substantial growth occurs, decisions must be made on how to lessen the auto congestion in the downtown streets and also along Bridge Street. In doing this, should the streets and bridges be widened? Should a new overpass be constructed over the railroad tracks? If the latter is implemented, where would this crossing be located?

### Economic Development

As stated earlier, the Town must decide what types of industries should be encouraged to locate there. This will require an analysis of local environmental considerations, the existing industrial/commercial mix, and social and economic characteristics of the population.

The well-being of the downtown area must also be a central focus of the new plan. We must ask first if the downtown area, besides being a government and professional center, should attempt to compete with the Route 40 (and subsequent regional shopping areas) as a commercial magnet. Once its future economic role is defined, what types of activities should be encouraged downtown and what are their needs in terms of space, parking, and other amenities? What additional public facilities are needed to insure the prosperity of the downtown area? Finally, what should be the roles of public and private interests in effecting these changes? Depending upon the emphasis which the Town wishes to take in the completion of the new plan, these questions remain to be answered.

# SECTION C

## PRELIMINARY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The following is a preliminary set of goals and objectives upon which the Town of Elkton's future development should be based.

### LAND USE

#### Goal

To provide for the appropriate use of land resources within a framework of orderly and controlled growth and development according to the specific needs of the Town of Elkton.

#### Objectives

##### General Objectives

To establish land use relationships which offer helpful, convenient, and efficient living and working arrangements.

To insure that the overall direction and magnitude of growth is consistent with preplanned strategies rather than the mere reaction to economic conditions and the land market.

To cooperate with appropriate County and State government agencies to encourage growth and development outside Elkton which compliments land uses within the boundaries of the Town.

To assure that existing and proposed land uses are viewed in terms of their present and ultimate public service requirements and according to the costs and benefits of each service to the Town of Elkton.

To insure that all future plans and projects, both public and private, exhibit the greatest possible respect for natural features of the land. This is particularly important in the areas south and east of the Big Elk Creek where flooding and soil constraints are prevalent.

To properly utilize open/under developed land within the older built-up areas of the Town. Development here should compliment the surrounding land uses and be consistent with the architectural design prevalent in the area.

##### Residential Land Use

To protect residential neighborhoods from encroachment by commercial and industrial activities.

To protect residential neighborhoods from through traffic.

To prevent scattered residential development.

To safeguard and promote the history and heritage of Elkton by preserving

areas, structures and sites of social, economic, political, architectural and historic significance.

#### Commercial Land Use

To prevent deterioration of the central business district and to enhance its role as a regional center of government and professional activity. This is to be done by improving traffic circulation/parking, improving the appearance of buildings in the downtown area, and encouraging new commercial activity to locate there.

To prevent future strip commercial development along major thoroughfares such as Bridge Street, Route 40, and Route 279.

To encourage development of compact commercial clusters at appropriate locations on major thoroughfares, thus preserving open land and providing customers with convenient one-stop shopping.

#### Industrial Land Use

To encourage the influx of industrial concerns with employment needs which compliment the skills of the Town's work force.

To minimize undesirable effects of industries such as smoke, odor and noise, in an effort to prevent hazards to public health and safety.

To provide buffers or transitional zones between industrial districts and residential areas.

To provide a variety of attractive, safe and convenient sites that are suitable for industry in terms of size, location, and physical characteristics of the land, accessibility of transportation and availability of utilities.

#### TRANSPORTATION

##### Goal

To provide a transportation system with a safe, convenient and efficient movement of people, goods and services among places of residence, employment and shopping and recreation, and to provide a circulation system which is compatible with and promotes the logical and rational development of the Town of Elkton.

##### Objectives

To maximize the capacity, safety and efficiency of the existing street and highway system.

To improve the street system to eliminate congestion, provide for smoother access between various sections of Town, and also to channel through traffic around Elkton.

To eliminate accident hazards and, particularly, dangerous intersections.

To preserve the capacity of major regional thoroughfares by limiting commercial and residential access.



To insure that neighborhood streets will be built, maintained and repaired as necessary to meet modern standards of neighborhood development.

## COMMUNITY FACILITIES

### Goal

To provide a system of community facilities which will assure an adequate and efficient level of public services to all residents of Elkton.

### Objectives

#### Recreation

To provide adequate recreation areas for all age groups within reasonably close proximity to concentrations of residential developments.

To preserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Elk Creek and Elk River and preserve the land adjacent to these water bodies for use as parks and other compatible activities.

To preserve existing outdoor recreation areas and open space from incompatible land use encroachment.

#### Education

To provide educational facilities adequate in size to handle the anticipated enrollment in their immediate service areas and strategically locate them so as to minimize traveling distance, especially at the elementary school level, and to best serve the future land use pattern of Elkton.

#### Water/Sewerage

To protect the health, safety, and welfare of all people residing in Elkton by maintaining and/or providing adequate water and sewerage systems.

To eliminate infiltration and inflow problems in the existing sewerage system so that it can be utilized to its full capacity in serving development.

To extend the water and sewerage systems in accordance with predetermined goals and policies.

#### Solid Waste

To provide Elkton residents with an efficient, environmentally sound, nonpolluting method of solid waste disposal.

## HOUSING

### Goal

To encourage development of safe, decent and sanitary housing in a variety of housing types, suitably located to permit good access and proximity to services, jobs and cultural amenities, in order to assure a wide possibility of choice to meet the housing needs of all economic segments in the Town of Elkton.



## Objectives

To preserve housing in good condition from replacement by other uses or public facilities unless a greater public need is served by such action.

To rehabilitate housing that needs improvement and is capable of being repaired and brought up to standard.

To provide increased housing particularly in the downtown area for small families, including the elderly, semi-retired, and other families with no children.

To encourage continued maintenance and upkeep of existing housing and stimulate the replacement of housing which becomes unfit for human habitation.







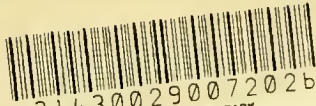








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UNIV. OF MD. COLLEGE PARK

**DO NOT CIRCULATE**



